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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to identify the issues that policy makers and practitioners ought to consider when formulating and establishing social policies and services for young children. The six chapters included are grouped according to three parts. Part 1 describes the context of social and family environments for children living in the United States and European countries, stressing the changes directly brought about in children's lives and indirectly reflected in the definition of their educational needs. Part 2, the main body of the report, reviews several topics which have importance to the greatest number of member countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and which constitute the common denominator in professional controversy and political debate on early childhood issues. Five such topics are discussed: the cost and financing of services for children, quality versus quantity of services, centralized versus decentralized models of service, professionals' versus parents' services, and public organization of services versus private service initiatives. Finally, Part 3 indicates likely trends that may guide and explain the choice of policies and practices in the field of early childhood care and education in the future. An article discussing a conceptual framework for the analysis of the economics of early childhood services completes the document. (MP)

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CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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Principal among those who have contributed to the quality of this report are the specialists from participating Member countries who, acting as consultants during the last phase of the CERI project, provided informal and continuous feedback as the enquiries and the various analyses were being carried out.

Among these, special acknowledgement must be made to Professors Sheldon White, Harvard University, Martin Rein, and Kurt Lüscher, University of Constance, who have been consultants to Massachusetts Institute of Technology since the beginning of phase three in 1976. Professor Laurent Pauli, University of Geneva, deserves particular thanks for his constant service as Chairman of the project's Advisory Group and as a most constructive critic of the first version of the report. Professor Carla Berry, of the Erikson Institute in Chicago, revised the text of the final version (presented to the Intergovernmental Conference in March 1980) in the light of the comments expressed by a number of national authorities.

With this welcome assistance and consultation, the report was prepared in the OECD Secretariat with whose authority it is now published. Responsible for its compilation (as for the ECCE project) was Norberto Bottani, Principal Administrator in CERI.

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PREFACE

Almost since its inception in 1968, CERI has been concerned with problems of early childhood specifically through the development of two main projects: the International Learning Sciences Programme and the Pre-school Education Project. This report concludes the second project which has developed, in a coherent fashion, since 1971, through three distinct phases.

During the initial phase, the main topic considered was compensatory education. This was a response to the strong interest expressed in many circles concerning the possibility of developing pre-school education as a means of combating inequalities in education and compensating for the deficiencies suffered by children from the disadvantaged classes. On the basis of American and British compensatory programmes in particular, CERI analysed the most effective methods and appropriate organisational procedures for stimulating the intellectual development of disadvantaged children and those other children who experience difficulty in adapting to the traditional school environment.

In 1971, pre-school education was common only in a few countries, but was starting to experience considerable expansion and popularity. Because of this increased interest it was urgent to define the crucial topics that should be taken into account in planning research or formulating policy for this sector.

The principal topics examined were: parent participation, pedagogical continuity at the moment of transfer to the compulsory school, staff training, and the search for structured pedagogical methods which would still respect children's spontaneity and encourage creativity. The findings of these studies and analyses were discussed at the International Conference on Developments in Pre-school Education, organised by the OECD in October 1973.

This assessment of the action undertaken was both contradictory and problematic. Contradictory, because it had to be admitted that despite the efforts to expand and improve pre-schooling, the children's subsequent school performance did not show any substantial improvement. Problematic, because at the very moment that pre-schooling was beginning to expand rapidly, political opposition to early childhood education projects began to surface.

During a two-year intermediary phase (1973-1975), CERI endeavoured to analyse this impasse and to identify possible remedies at the policy level, stressing in particular the need for a reorganisation of the existing pre-school system including arrangements for children under three.

As a result of these findings, a third phase of the work was initiated in 1976. This was characterised by a radical change of perspective which was based on an "ecological" approach to the problems of childhood, in order to identify the many tightly interwoven factors that constitute the child's environment and affect the use of services. Only after achieving a better knowledge of these can one proceed to define the objectives for and the instruments of a successful policy of intervention in favour of children.

This report concludes the third phase of the project. It served as the main background paper for the Intergovernmental Conference on Policies for Children organised by CERI in March 1980. The assessments it contains are based on data and information obtained from national contributions prepared by the countries taking part in the Project, as well as from other sources. There is much in this report to interest and, indeed, stimulate, all those concerned with problems of early childhood who, it is believed, will join its authors in the hope that, even in a period of slow and difficult economic growth, the surge of innovation that inspired the development of pre-school education may continue as an effective force in the best interests of young children and their families.

J.R. Gass, Director
Centre for Educational Research
and Innovation

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to identify the issues that policy makers and practitioners ought to consider in formulating their decisions and establishing their practices. It is not intended as a descriptive or comparative study of the developments in pre-school services in Member countries. It offers a critical examination of the principal programmes implemented for children in order to ascertain, as far as is possible, their real impact and effectiveness.

Public and private sector initiatives in favour of children can be properly evaluated only if attention is paid to the social and geographical environment in which children live. This necessitates both an effort to understand the way of life of different family groups and to identify the outstanding problems and practical difficulties that plague them. It is also important to identify the spontaneous and/or organised forces at work in the environment that may result in change.

One of the principal purposes of the report is to examine the several different perspectives from which problems concerning children may be viewed: each can result in a different set of options for remedial action. Among them are the viewpoints of children and families, of practitioners, of institutions and administrators, of scientists, and of policy makers. The report stresses the diversity of the interests involved and the consequent complex balance of power that is established. This balance ultimately structures the policies for children and affects the possibility of their success and their appropriateness. The intention explains the care that has been taken to describe the many-faceted nature of the world of children and the stress that has been laid on the importance of understanding the context of statements and evaluations.

Each group with its own perspective may seek answers to different questions, solutions to different problems, and may adopt different values in evaluating results. Thus, pronouncements, plans and policy measures must be analysed carefully within the context of the particular viewpoint expressed. Statements from different sources, while employing roughly the same terminology and addressing the same population group (pre-school-age children) may, nevertheless, have a different significance.

In view of these considerations, we have chosen in this report to approach the issues examined via the problems, that is to adopt an approach that clarifies the problems or identifies the elements to consider in order to reveal the true nature and extent of the issues involved. Conversely, given the present state of knowledge, to have proposed overly specific solutions would have been naive, or even partial. In essence, then, the basic preoccupation throughout this study has been to encourage all those active in the field of early childhood care and education to look for the real problems and the real issues that are often hidden behind the almost universally held desire to act immediately to solve children's problems.

This being our basic objective, it has not been seen a necessary purpose of the report to sum up the state of the art concerning early childhood or to offer an exhaustive presentation of the conclusions that can be drawn from the experiences of the past few years in the industrialised countries. Thus, for example, we do not treat such topics as specific aspects of children's learning and development, programmes of activities within institutions, or questions of staff training.

The report is presented in three parts. Part One (chapters I and II) describes the context and social and family environments of children. However, it does not offer a detailed or comparative analysis of children's way of life in the industrialised countries, carried out according to a strict classification of the different "living spaces". Essentially, it endeavours to identify a number of features, selected according to their impact on children's environments, and to stress the changes that they have brought about in the way of life and indirectly in the definition of the educational needs of children.

Part Two (chapters III and IV), the main body of the report, reviews a number of topics that have weight in the analyses and documentation of most OECD countries and which constitute the common denominator in professional controversy and political debate on early childhood issues.

Five such topics are dealt with:

i) The cost and financing of services for children.

ii) Quality versus quantity, a classic dilemma related to the problem of costs, which here refers to the functions to be favoured in the development of pre-school services. It is analysed in the light of the debate on standards to be adopted in the services.

iii) Centralised versus decentralised models for the development and organisation of services.

iv) Professionals versus parents, one of the most widely known conflicts, concerned with the day-to-day relationship between users and staff.

v) Public organisation of services versus a model favouring private initiatives, particularly family initiatives.

Part Three of the report (chapters V and VI) examines future problems. The first two parts discussed the environment that gave rise to the problems that lie at the centre of current policy discussions. This final section indicates likely trends that may guide and explain the choice of policies and practices in the field of early childhood care and education in the future.

Thus, in our view of the problems arising in the course of a child's development, education and (especially) socialisation, there are many solutions and strategies. Unlike the school sector, which is centred around education, the pre-school sector taken as a whole has the children's socialisation as its main function. This includes education, but goes beyond it, so a pre-school policy that isolated the child by considering exclusively the individual and psychological aspects would probably be heading for failure. It is the whole of the environment that surrounds him and constitutes the background to his life that has to be taken into account: the people, groups and institutions that work and live with children.

The conclusion is that the objectives of a policy for early childhood have, therefore, to be much broader and more diversified than those of a policy for schools. It is matter of developing a generally better way of life for children, of neutralising the sources of inequity and disadvantage and creating optimal conditions for the individual to develop and mature within the context of family and society.

In the second place, a social policy for young children must aim at combating measures that do anything detrimental to their way of life, and, finally, it must inform public opinion about their specific and general needs.

A global and synthesising approach is recommended that defines and organises an inventory of points that have to be taken into account by policy makers. It could be said that social policy for children is an example par excellence of intersectoral policy which necessitates dealing with policies emanating from different sources. The considerations that are presented here can therefore be considered as an examination of the meaning of an intersectoral policy, an attempt to scrutinise its components and reveal its aims.

I

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN FAMILY LIFE

In modern advanced societies, the entourage in which children grow up has undergone profound changes over the course of the last few decades, giving rise to new social and educational problems. It is not easy to grasp the exact impact of these concrete changes on the relationships that adults establish with children. (1) [x]

To start with, the group of adults in the child's immediate entourage will be considered, those people with whom the child establishes his first affective ties and in whose company the fundamental apprenticeship to life and the first cultural experiences develop; those who exercise a direct influence on the child.

Afterwards we shall move further from the child in order to examine some major phenomena which, though not affecting him directly, have important indirect effects on his conditions of life, such as increasing educational standards, improvements in pediatric services and finally the organisation of active life.

1. RELATIONS BETWEEN GENERATIONS

The magnitude of certain social transformations characteristic of the development of industrial societies (for example, migration, the move away from the land, urbanisation, large-scale entry of women into active life) have given rise to the idea that major upheavals are affecting the organisation of family structure, relations between married children and their parents, grandchildren and grandparents, in short between the generations within the family or the household.

Indeed, on the basis of certain statistics (number of divorces, number of single parent families, number of illegitimate births, etc.) (Le Bras, 1979), it might be supposed that an important shift in family relationships is taking place, resulting in the single-nucleus family, with two adults and one or two children becoming the norm. This family is considered to be economically and affectively self-sufficient, and almost without any contact with their relatives or even the neighbours. Thus married children would establish their families away from the influence and interference of their own family circle and the children would see only their parents, their grandparents rarely, and the uncles, aunts and cousins even less often. Families would be more and more isolated, deprived of the support of their relatives, and thus finally more exposed than ever to the risk of breaking up.

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[x] See Notes and References pages 174-180 and 181-185.

However, on observing more closely the variety of ways in which families actually live, the picture that emerges is not so exaggerated or stereotypic as the previous portrait and in any event does not support predictions of the imminent disappearance of the family.

It is probable that changes affecting the dynamics of family relationships are taking place, but they would have to be examined carefully before current developments are judged dangerous or detrimental to the future of the family. To clarify this remark, three specific situations will be taken into consideration:

i) Increased life expectancy

The increase in the average length of life as shown in table 1 is probably one of the most interesting phenomena for the evolution of family relationships. In fact, with families extending over several generations, it is possible that a different organisation of interactions between members of the family will develop, assisted by the demographic changes of the last few years.

Children being rare in comparison with the rest of the population, their survival and their education will become increasingly important.

ii) The presence of grandparents

The analyses of the vertical relationships that link children to their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents draws attention to the importance that such relationships have now acquired in the environment of children (Le Bras, 1973) as the result of trends in mortality, life expectancy and fertility. Le Bras described the case of France (1972 data) in the following terms: "an individual loses his father between the ages of 30 and 50, his mother between 40 and 60; at the age of 55, one person in two has lost his mother and father; this is an age towards the end of his working life, an age at which no doubt this experience has less significance for his future, where it is the prelude to old age rather than to maturity".

Concerning the presence of grandparents, Le Bras observes that "42 per cent of children still have all four grandparents when they are born; only 1 per cent have no longer any grandparent at the age of 20, half the population still having at least two. The presence of grandparents is thus the dominant childhood situation."

This presence of the grandparents extends the dimension of the family, all the more so because there are also many cases of families where the children still have at least one great-grandparent. The child is thus surrounded by several known members of the family who play a more or less direct part in his and his parents' lives. The presence of the grandparents constitutes an important social and educative factor in the life of a child, offering different experiences from those lived with the parents, and being a source of deep feelings and emotions even if there is little direct contact or exchange with the grandparents. Le Bras points out that "the death of at least one grandparent is experienced by nearly every child and is no doubt, for the vast majority, the first experience of the death of a loved one".

iii) Interaction between generations

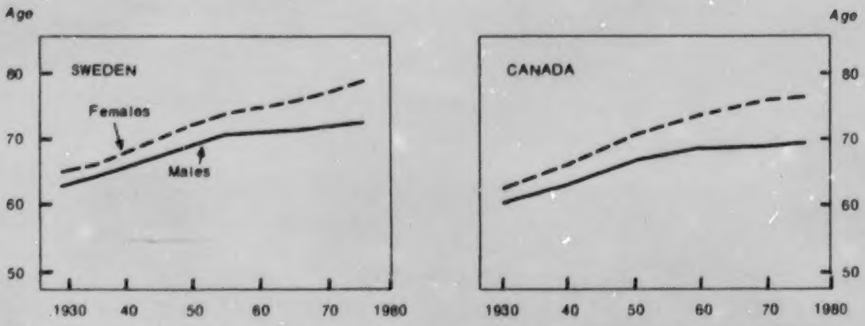
It is reasonable to expect that this simultaneous presence of several generations gives rise to increased interaction between them. The existence of these exchanges, their importance and the way in which they operate have been demonstrated by two other French studies. One of them, on the basis of data from several surveys, states that "relations with the extended family constitute an important part of the forms of sociability in urban society" and even that "the enlarged family is a concrete fact for the majority of our urban households" (Pitrou, 1977).

The second, an empirical study carried out under the aegis of the INED (Institut national d'études démographiques) confirms this state of affairs and brings to light the importance that this solidarity between the generations has for French families today (Roussel, 1976).

The conclusion of the INED study formulates the hypothesis that "this strengthening of the solidarity between generations too, would tend to devalue all other social relationships. The disappearance or dilution of personal relationships outside the family, their reduction to mere functional exchanges, has caused all emotional investment to flow back in the first place to conjugal life, but also to the family in the broader sense". Finally, if one considers "that this large family is made up of couples which are more fragile than formerly, that the children are less and less numerous, and above all that relationships between the generations draw part of their justification from the impoverishment of external social relationships", it can be supposed that "the health of the large family cannot be dissociated from the debility of its environment. A breach has been opened between the family and society, and the former often serves as a refuge from the latter".

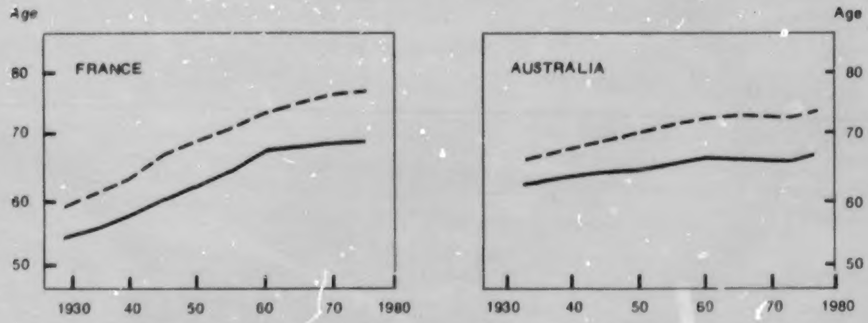
It may be important to consider the variable of social class when discussing the pattern of inter-generation contact in families. A Dutch investigation showed that there was more contact between generations in the lower social classes than in the higher levels. This was most often initiated by the daughter. (2) What are the consequences of such a situation from the point of view of children's education? Can it be concluded that parents find sufficient support amongst the relatives to solve the practical problems posed by the presence of children?

Table 1 **TRENDS IN LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH FROM 1930**



Source : Living Conditions, Report No. 6, National Bureau of Statistics, Stockholm, 1977

Source : Health Field Indicators, Health and Welfare, Canada, 1976



Source : Données Sociales 3ème Edition INSEE Paris 1978

Source : Social Indicators No 2 1978 Australian Bureau of Statistics Canberra

The above countries were selected as being representative of the gradual increase in life expectancies at birth experienced by OECD countries in recent years while at the same time displaying some of the differences which exist. For females, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands experienced life expectancies of approximately 78 years in 1976 whereas the corresponding value in Portugal was approximately 72 years. A similar range of about six years occurs for males, which indicates substantial differences in death rates. The increasing discrepancy between male and female life expectancies is a common phenomenon. In 1976, this sex discrepancy had reached more than eight years in France and was approaching that in several other countries. This is essentially attributed to different life styles adopted by males and females but the influence of biological factors cannot be ignored, as indicated by higher infant mortality rates for males.

A certain amount of caution is called for here. Indeed, it must first of all be pointed out that the presence of relatives implies forms of mutual aid of a somewhat symbolic nature and that exchanges between parents and children are determined by laws more complex than the supply and demand of services for looking after the little ones. What is more, this solidarity seems to be least effective in the field of education, for young couples jealously guard their prerogatives in the choice of values and styles of education. It is therefore very difficult to determine the contribution that "the modified extended family" is really able to offer in the matter of education and care of children, although it is reasonable to suppose that, from the practical point of view, there are important exchanges.

It might be objected that this less alarmist description of the family and the situation of children is specific to France and cannot be taken as generally valid. In fact, the picture is no different in other European countries and demographers agree on this. The United States, given the extreme mobility of its population, could be an exception, but here too the bonds between parents and married children are maintained, (3) particularly within the working class and the ethnic minorities (Woolsey, 1977).

Taking these considerations into account, it would be wrong to justify the necessity for an increased supply of crèches and other facilities for children only by pointing to the disappearance of the extended family, modified or otherwise. As we have just seen, this kind of family structure still exists and is continuing and developing. Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to proceed on the view that child care is the only function sought in early education. Families may seek educational advantages in schools even if relatives live just around the corner and can look after children. It is important to distinguish the various functions of pre-school and to see how they relate to the needs of specific types of people and to the different forms of organisation of the households.

2. THE CHILD'S DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT

Demographic data do not only serve to sound the alarm about our societies' chances of survival; they can also inform us about the immediate environment of children, letting us know amongst other things:

- the make-up of family and household structures;
- the number of relatives and their relationships;
- the number and degree of relationship of those who have daily contact with the children.

1) Natality problems

As of the mid-seventies, the appearance of strong natalist preoccupations is to be observed in several Member countries. This phenomenon is not new in itself and is linked to the drop in fertility rates and the resulting fall in birth rates.

In certain countries (table 2) births have been falling regularly since the end of the war (Yugoslavia, Finland); in others, the decline started at the beginning of the sixties (the United States, Canada, Belgium, New Zealand) and finally, in the majority of European countries (Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Germany), this phenomenon made its appearance in the mid-sixties. This trend accentuated during the seventies and there are only a few countries that constitute an exception (Japan and Ireland, for example, where births have been rising steadily since the beginning of the sixties).

The magnitude of these fluctuations implies a whole series of immediate consequences for policies for children as well as long-term repercussions on social policy in general. Hence the importance of a better understanding of the problem of the birth rate and the whole of the circumstances in which new generations make their appearance. Essentially, it is not simply a matter of satisfying a need for knowledge, but also of exploring the scope for exerting influence on the processes of natural population growth.

In the past, a certain number of countries (France and Germany in particular) have implemented natalist policies, providing a series of measures favourable to families designed to increase the number of children (De Sandre, 1976). The effectiveness of such policies, however, remains to be proved. The matter was examined at a Council of Europe seminar (4) where a certain number of demographers expressed very reserved opinions. The main stumbling-block was the difficulty of correctly evaluating the effects of such measures. (5)

The area over which demographic policy measures can be applied is, of course, extremely broad: legislation on marriage, separation and divorce, on contraception and abortion, as well as all the legislation supporting the family (maternity assistance and grants, tax relief, family allowances, allowances for dependent children, for care, for education, etc. All of these can influence fertility, but they can also fit into a policy of well-being and welfare that leads to anti-natalist consequences (De Sandre, 1976).

Nevertheless, as a result of the present period of demographic stagnation or decline being experienced by a good number of OECD Member countries, the idea of an active demographic policy to combat the fall in the birth rate is once more becoming popular. (6) Within this perspective, policies for the family and policies in favour of children are becoming aligned. In a sense, it is a question of reconciling two

Table 2

BIRTHS PER YEAR BY COUNTRY

(In thousands)

Year	Germany	Australia	Austria	Belgium	Canada	Denmark	Spain	United States	Finland	France	Greece	Ireland	Iceland	Italy	Japan	Luxembourg	New Zealand	Norway	Netherlands	Portugal	United Kingdom	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	Yugoslavia
1950	813	191	108	143	372	80	559	3 645	98	858	151	64	3.9	909	2 338	4.1	49	62	229	205	818	115	85		494
1951	796	193	103	143	381	77	561	3 845	93	823	155	63	4.0	864	2 138	4.2	50	61	228	208	797	110	82		447
1952	799	202	103	146	404	77	586	3 933	94	819	150	65	4.1	847	2 005	4.5	52	63	232	211	793	110	84		449
1953	796	202	103	146	418	78	583	3 989	91	801	144	63	4.3	842	1 868	4.6	52	63	228	202	804	110	83		484
1954	816	202	104	148	436	76	572	4 102	90	807	152	63	4.3	871	1 770	4.7	54	63	228	198	795	105	84		494
1955	820	208	109	149	443	77	592	4 128	90	802	154	62	4.5	869	1 731	4.7	56	64	229	210	789	107	85		471
1956	856	202	116	151	451	77	601	4 244	89	803	158	61	4.6	884	1 665	4.8	57	64	231	203	825	108	88		460
1957	892	208	119	152	469	75	639	4 332	87	813	156	61	4.7	886	1 567	5.0	58	63	234	212	851	107	91		427
1958	904	212	120	156	470	75	646	4 279	81	809	155	60	4.7	880	1 653	5.0	61	63	237	213	871	106	91		432
1959	952	227	124	161	479	74	647	4 313	83	826	160	60	4.8	911	1 626	5.0	62	63	242	213	879	105	93		424
1960	969	230	126	156	479	76	655	4 307	82	816	157	61	4.9	923	1 606	5.0	63	62	239	214	918	102	94		433
1961	1 013	240	132	158	476	76	646	4 317	82	835	150	60	4.6	924	1 589	5.1	65	63	247	218	944	105	99		422
1962	1 019	237	133	154	470	78	650	4 213	81	829	152	62	4.7	946	1 619	5.1	65	62	246	220	976	107	104		413
1963	1 054	236	135	158	466	82	663	4 142	82	865	148	63	4.8	978	1 676	5.1	65	63	250	212	990	113	110		407
1964	1 065	229	134	160	454	83	689	4 070	80	874	153	64	4.8	1 035	1 732	5.2	62	66	251	217	1 015	123	113		401
1965	1 044	223	130	155	419	86	668	3 801	78	862	151	63	4.7	1 018	1 823	5.3	60	66	245	210	998	123	112		408
1966	1 050	223	128	151	388	88	662	3 642	78	860	155	62	4.7	999	1 375	5.2	60	67	240	207	980	123	110		400
1967	1 019	229	127	146	371	81	672	3 555	77	837	163	61	4.4	962	1 955	5.0	61	67	239	202	962	122	107		390
1968	970	241	126	141	364	75	660	3 535	74	833	160	61	4.2	945	1 887	4.7	62	68	237	195	947	113	105		383
1969	903	250	121	141	370	71	659	3 630	68	840	154	63	4.2	949	1 907	4.5	63	68	248	190	921	108	103		382
1970	811	258	112	141	370	71	656	3 739	65	848	145	64	4.0	917	1 948	4.4	62	65	239	181	904	110	99		363
1971	779	276	109	139	362	76	665	3 556	62	879	141	68	4.3	911	2 037	4.5	64	66	227	181	902	115	96		375
1972	701	265	104	135	347	76	666	3 258	59	875	141	68	4.7	893	2 075	4.1	63	64	214	175	834	112	91		380
1973	636	248	98	129	347	72	666	3 137	57	855	138	68	4.6	888	2 107	3.8	61	61	195	172	780	110	88		377
1974	626	245	97	123	346	71	682	3 160	62	799	144	69	4.2	887	2 044	3.9	59	60	186	172	737	110	83		383
1975	601	233	94	119	358	72	669	3 144	67	743	142	68	4.4	842	1 915	4.0	57	56	178	176	698	104	79		388
1976	603	228	87	120	365	65	662	3 163	67	720	147	68	4.3	807	1 845	3.9	55	53	177	187	676	99	74		390

Source: H. Le Bras, Child and Family. Demographic Developments in the OECD Countries, OECD/CERI, Paris, 1979.

complementary positions: the natalist, preoccupied with quantity (more children) and the family viewpoint that aims at quality (to ensure the best opportunities for growth, for everyone if possible, but for the most disadvantaged as a minimum). In certain respects, these positions are contradictory: respect for the rights of the individual could in fact suggest a policy of reducing the birth rate, which would allow the demands of all to be better taken into consideration. The union between these two trends depends on a gamble: increasing the birth rate.

ii) The make-up of family and household structures

The family microcosm is extraordinarily differentiated and, even limiting the description to those families with children, the typology that can be constructed immediately becomes complex.

To demonstrate the great variety of possible situations we shall just cite two examples of typologies here, one Yugoslav, the other British.

The Yugoslav tables consider the following possibilities for a single family household:

- one couple without children
- one couple with children
- single mother or father with children
- father or mother with a married son or daughter and their children (grandchildren)
- couple with children and the husband's or wife's unmarried brothers and sisters
- couple without children and the husband's or wife's unmarried brothers or sisters
- other single family households

British census recognises the following varieties of a family comprising a married couple with children:

- married couple with child(ren) and no other persons
- married couple with child(ren) and with other persons
    - with one or more ancestors
    - with one or more ancestors and other relatives only
    - with one or more ancestors, other relatives and unrelated persons
    - with one or more ancestors and unrelated persons only
    - with other relatives only
    - with other relatives and unrelated persons
    - with unrelated persons only.

Now, if this typology is combined with other parameters, for example socio-occupational status or number of active persons, the immense diversity of situations experienced by children is immediately obvious. In other words, there is an enormous number of different family worlds in which they may grow up: there are not only the parents and siblings, or one of the parents, but also grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandchildren, servants, boarders, married brothers or sisters, with or without children. It must also be remembered that households undergo changes over time. Of particular interest are the changes of environment for the child whose parents have divorced and remarried. Such families are often "corporations" including a mixture of adults and children from two families.

These observations are important, because very often the variety of "realities" is underestimated. Through stressing the role of the parents, one ends up by forgetting about all the others, as if the majority of families consisted just of one couple and their children. Certainly this is the majority situation, in the sense that it applies to a great number of children, but a good number of other situations exist alongside it.

iii) Single-nucleus households

Table 3 showing the proportion of households that consist of only a married couple and their children with respect to the total number of private households indicates that the ratio varies appreciably from one country to another.

If one now changes perspective and looks at the situation from the point of view of the children, one sees that the vast majority of those aged 16 or less live in households where both parents are present (the statistics do not reveal, however, how many other people may be living in the house) (Le Bras, 1979).

The proportions are as follows:

Germany: 88 per cent of children under 15.
Austria: 96 per cent of children under 15.
Belgium: 89.2 per cent of children (age limit not stated).
Finland: 94 per cent of children under 7;
86 per cent of the total number of children (age limit not stated).
Italy: 85 per cent of children live in a household reduced to a family nucleus.
Luxembourg: 96.5 per cent of children under 5 are in complete families.
Norway: 88.5 per cent of children under 16 live in nuclear families.
Switzerland: 85 per cent of children under 7 live in nuclear families.

It should be noted that these figures present an image of the situation at a given moment: they do not say anything about the experiences undergone by children throughout the whole of their young life. It is probable

Table 3

SINGLE-NUCLEUS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS *

Country	Type of household	Year	% age of single-nucleus households
Germany	Parent(s) with unmarried children or grandchildren	1970	44.9
U.K.	Married couple with child(ren), no others	1971	40.0
Austria	Family households with a single family nucleus and no other persons	1971	59.0
Belgium	Married couple and unmarried child(ren)	1961 1970	39.0 39.8
Ireland	Man, wife and one or more single children (of any age)	1961 1966	36.9 38.8
Italy	Head of family, his wife, his children and single head of family and his children (with or without aged persons)	1971	54.0
Luxembourg	Parent(s) with unmarried child(ren)	1970	44.4
Norway	Married couple with unmarried children		43.0
New Zealand	Husband and wife plus children	1971	41.43
Portugal	Couples with children and no other relatives	1960	47.4
Sweden	Couple with children	1970	30.6
Switzerland	Couple with children	1960 1970	35.7 38.2
Yugoslavia	One couple with children	1970	42.0

* The percentages shown here are only of illustrative value and are difficult to compare. In fact, the definition of the household used in the different national censuses is not the same. The data given here refer to household types that are not defined in the same fashion, but which nevertheless have the greatest degree of similarity. Thus, this category includes also households comprising aged parents with elderly unmarried children who still live with them. To make these differences clear each country's official definition of the type of household is given in the table.

that a large number of them pass through numerous family situations. If the percentages were reflecting the proportion of children passing their entire childhood with both parents, the figures would certainly be lower.

The framework within which children live is thus becoming more distinct and it does indeed appear (the reservation is necessary because the criteria according to which the situations are quantified are sometimes too vague or too different from one another) that the vast majority of them live in households with both parents. Nevertheless, this rather reassuring observation is not very clear for all that, as these households can be very complex, with one or two family nuclei, where there are one or more other people who are not their parents.

iv) Effects on the process of the socialisation of children

Socialisation is a central topic in any consideration of the development of children. Many issues (psychological, sociological, anthropological) lie within its scope and warrant investigation. However, this report will focus on the issue of "agents of socialisation" which is particularly relevant to a discussion of family demography.

The presence or absence of the parents or of one parent does not appear to be an adequate index of the quality of educative relationships. Given the demographic picture of the child's ecological environment, it would be advisable to examine the role that other people living in the household play in the educative process or more generally in the socialisation of the child.

The majority of children, especially those under 6, live in nuclear families, but it is not possible to determine whether other people are also present in the household. In this context it is obvious that the configuration of educative relationships is by no means uniform. Indeed, it is probable that if there are other people in the household besides the parent(s), they also play a part in the child's life, and all the more so if these "other" people are relatives. They are not just "persons outside the family", to use another category sometimes employed. It is therefore necessary to make finer distinctions if the true educative dynamic is to be ascertained, for example along the lines suggested by the French census which uses, amongst others, the categories "friend" (hence also cohabitant), "lodger", "boarder", all people who can be of great significance for the child living in contact with them.

It is likely that the needs of adults having the care of children would also vary following the different types of households. It might well be imagined, for example, that in a household comprising a married couple where the husband is often away (a category used in the New Zealand census), the care and education of the children will be differently organised than in the case of a similar couple but with a grandparent also present. The parental needs are thus determined in the first place by the internal dynamics of the family situation and not just by the kind and quality of the local facilities. However, the same factors do not always produce the same response. Let us consider the situation of a household consisting of the husband's or wife's parents (the grandparents), the married couple (the parents) and their children (the grandchildren). The presence of the grandparents means that the need for the services of a crèche can either be superfluous or necessary. On the other hand, the grandparents will look after the children because they stay at home, they are in good health, they like children and the son or daughter with whom they live has confidence in them. But the opposite can well be imagined too. In another case, because the presence of the grandparents causes practical difficulties in the household, the parents prefer to place the children outside the family as soon as possible, either because they do not want them to bother the grandparents, or because they do not accept their ideas about bringing up children.

This diversity of needs becomes apparent in the demand for facilities. As a rule, the analysis of the demand is limited to crude generalisations of the type: the demand for facilities is growing; middle-class demand is higher than ever before; the disadvantaged classes do not voice a particularly strong demand. These observations, even though they might be true, are not a great deal of use from the point of view of practical action. Indeed, instead of demand, one should speak of demands, so varied and different are the households. Only the development of a revised family typology more appropriate to the issues than that generally used for knowing the children's real living conditions (perhaps constructed on the basis of a household survey) would allow us to accomplish our task of identifying convergent interests for the care and education of children and devising new forms of service relevant to the unmet needs of care and education of a variety of households. One should not impose the same obligations on people living in different contexts.

3. EDUCATION

The development of education and more particularly the expansion of schooling are among the factors that must be included in a description of the major causes of the transformation of children's way of life in industrial society. Although one must take care not to be led astray by explanations based on a superficial interpretation of historical development (7), and avoid attaching too great an importance to the introduction of compulsory schooling in the so-called process of acculturation of the masses, it is necessary to stress the role that the spread of formal education has played in bringing scientific knowledge to the people, the dissemination of behavioural norms and of new values regarding children.

While avoiding a discussion of the knotty problem of real or imagined correlations between the educative behaviour of adults in their daily dealings with children and their socio-occupational status and educational level, two aspects of educational development are worthy of mention:

- effects of education in changing behaviour concerning children's education;
- general acceptance of schooling.

i) Effects of education

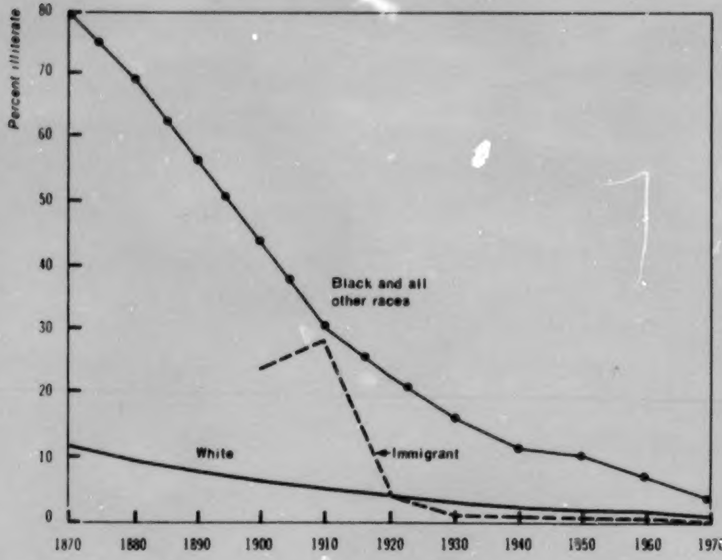
The existence in all Member countries of an adult population who have almost all received formal schooling constitutes a complete break with the situation that still prevailed at the turn of the century. Today, the number of adults who are unable to read and write is very small in the developed countries, even though the number who fail to complete the compulsory schooling still remains high. (See tables 4 and 5 for figures showing changes in the schooling of minorities in the United States since 1870.) However, there are other shadows across this bright picture and they concern mainly women's education. In the richest countries, the difference between men's and women's education is becoming less and less marked (even though significant differences still remain, depending on the branch chosen); in others, differences between the basic schooling (primary and secondary) of boys and girls are maintained, the girls leaving school earlier or attending schools and lessons reserved for them (8).

From the point of view of children and their relationships with adults, it might be asked whether this advance, despite its inequality, has had any direct impact on the educative conduct of adults and caused any changes in their behaviour. Now, it seems that there are not sufficient data available to make any statement whatsoever on this subject regarding knowledge acquired through the education system (9). One might nevertheless put forward the hypothesis that virtually universal mastery of the instruments of formal knowledge has had the effect, amongst others, of creating the conditions necessary for the large-scale dissemination and reception of informal knowledge about education, children and families by the mass media and commercial advertising networks. The effects of this information on everyday behaviour have not yet been scientifically evaluated as the influence exercised by the greater receptiveness of the public on the spread of information, and the growth of knowledge relating to children is not yet known.

ii) The general acceptance of schooling

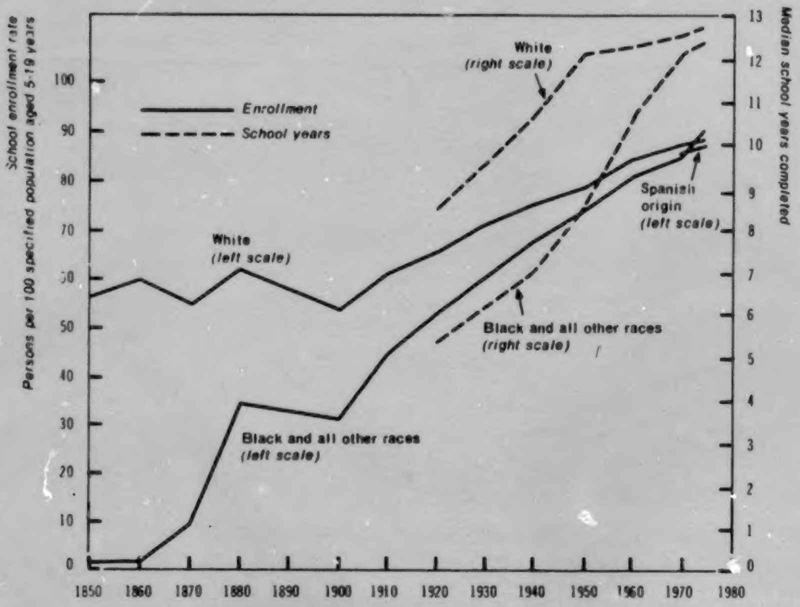
Having to send the children to school every day has also served to modify relationships between them and adults. The most obvious result of this obligation is the systematic concentration of children in places reserved exclusively for them: the schools. The existence of schools, a space officially allowed (one might say consecrated) to children, has automatically altered their circulation among adults in the social space. The resulting separation between children and adults, quickly codified, has given birth to an artificial child society, structured according to

Table 4 **UNITED STATES: ILLITERACY AMONG RESIDENT AND IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS: 1870-1969**



Source: US Department of Health, Education and Welfare: ***200 Years of Children***, Washington, 1976.

Table 5 **UNITED STATES: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED: 1850-1974**



Source: US Department of Health, Education and Welfare: ***200 Years of Children***, Washington, 1976 legal criteria and operating in a rigid fashion, very different from the freely formed children's societies, with their hierarchies and laws, which must still have been fairly widespread in the nineteenth century. It is therefore scarcely surprising that from the introduction of compulsory education until the first decades of the twentieth century, children's schooling sometimes met with lively resistance and even downright opposition in certain social strata and especially amongst the children themselves. In Western society today, compulsory schooling no longer poses any problem; everybody is used to it and accepts it as natural, to such an extent that it is difficult to imagine the enormous change brought about by the phenomenon at several points of impact, but especially in the lives of families and children.

Children's presence in society has thus been disciplined and regulated by the creation of a protected space and an assigned period of time, the years of childhood. In this regard, some authors do not hesitate to speak of an "enclosure" of childhood, which progressive or alternative educational theories have been unable to open, while others denounce the "infantilisation" of children. In any case, the success of compulsory education, whatever interpretation one may like to put on it, reflects a profound change in childhood status and the rallying of different concepts of childhood around a dominant model (10). A new awareness of children, whether it be on the part of society in general or within the family, is developing (but this does not mean that the general agreement in favour of schooling implies shared and acknowledged values regarding childhood and its aims). However, this awareness explains the attention given to (not to say preoccupation with) children's education that is to be found at all levels of society. Changing attitudes towards schooling are eloquent on this point. Nowadays, sending children to school at the age of six no longer seems enough, and there is general acceptance that learning begins long before this age. This belief combined with other factors favouring pre-school (mothers in the workforce, desire for peer relationships) have resulted in an increased nursery school attendance. Quite apart from the running and pedagogic content of these schools (and the problems of adaptation to the compulsory school which their specific nature sometimes cause), what is significant is their popularity as institutions reserved for small children and attending exclusively to them.

In conclusion, it can be stated that today more and more levels of the population are becoming aware of the importance of the education of young children and want appropriate forms of pre-school facilities to be provided for their own. All such attitudes reveal significant changes in the attitude towards the child and adult-child interaction within families and households, the political consequences of which for public authorities are particularly important.

4. HEALTH

One of the most spectacular changes that has affected family structure, children's lives and social environment as well as parental behaviour, has without doubt occurred in the realm of medical care for children.

In the first place, these have greatly modified the circumstances of birth in industrial societies. Formerly, it was both a social and a domestic event, taking place at home with, in the ideal case, the help of the family doctor or the midwife (two "professionals" knowing the family well) and sometimes of other women or even the husband (Loux, 1978). Nowadays, childbirth has become a medical event, necessitating the hospitalisation of mother and child, even more sophisticated equipment and various specialists. The commencement of life has thus been radically changed, as have the early years: hygiene and the nourishment of the new-born have been transformed and, thanks to antibiotics and vaccinations, numerous children's diseases, which for so long were veritable plagues, decimating the infant population, have now been brought under control.

The most spectacular result of these changes is without doubt the reduction in infant mortality rates.

1) Infant mortality

The picture of infant mortality (table 6) has also changed considerably over the last hundred years. The positive result of this change has been first of all the progressive reduction of the proportion of children dying in the first year. From the point of view of the families, one might say that the death of a child, which was formerly almost a commonplace, is now an exceptional event (from the medical and social point of view, on the other hand, the considerations are somewhat different and will be set out later). There is virtually no risk any more of a parent losing a child or a child losing a brother or sister (Le Bras, 1979).

Irrespective of the social and cultural implications of a change of this magnitude (11) and the consequences regarding the means employed to achieve these results, it is the change in the composition of families and households that must be emphasized here. Today families generally have less children, but their life expectancy is high; these "more certain" children are more important, therefore receiving more and better care. They are becoming a major preoccupation for the parents and even for the relatives. The children themselves have fewer brothers and sisters, but they live longer with their parents, know their grandparents and great-grandparents, as well as uncles, aunts and cousins. The age differences between children are fairly even, whereas in the past there was a very wide age spread among the surviving children, which must have had an influence on sibling relationships.

Table 6

INFANT MORTALITY RATE, BY YEAR, FOR EACH COUNTRY

Year	Germany	Australia	Austria	Belgium	Canada	Denmark	United States	Spain	Finland	France	Greece	Ireland	Iceland	Italy	Japan	Luxemburg	New Zealand	Norway	Netherlands	Portugal	United Kingdom	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	Yugoslavia
1945																									
1946	97.1																								
1947	86.3																								
1948	68.9	27.8	76.2	59.0		35.0	32.0	64.3	51.9			50.3			61.7		27.4	29.6	29.3	100.2			36.0		
1949	59.6	25.3	75.2	57.2		34.0	31.3	68.9	48.3	60.3	41.9	53.2			62.5		30.0	27.7	26.8	114.5			34.0		
1950	55.3	24.5	66.1	53.4		31.0	29.2	64.2	43.5	51.9	35.4	46.2			60.1		27.6	28.2	25.2	94.1		20.0	31.0		
1951	53.4	25.2	61.3	50.0	38.5	29.0	28.4	62.6	35.4	50.2	43.5	45.7	27.3	66.5	57.5	42.6	27.5	25.7	25.1	89.1	31.1	21.6	30.0		139.8
1952	48.3	23.8	51.9	44.8	38.2	29.0	28.4	54.7	31.8	45.1	40.5	41.4	20.6	63.4	49.4	45.0	28.4	23.7	22.5	94.3	28.8	20.0	29.0		105.0
1953	46.5	23.3	49.9	41.8	35.6	27.0	27.8	52.8	34.2	41.7	42.4	39.4	19.0	58.4	48.9	42.3	25.7	22.0	22.1	93.5	27.6	18.7	30.0		116.1
1954	43.5	22.5	48.3	41.3	31.9	27.0	26.6	54.2	30.6	40.8	42.3	37.8	18.2	53.0	44.6	44.8	24.0	21.4	21.1	85.5	26.4	18.7	27.0		101.6
1955	41.9	22.0	45.6	40.7	31.3	25.0	26.4	56.3	29.7	38.6	43.5	36.8	22.4	50.9	39.8	40.5	24.5	20.6	20.1	90.2	25.8	17.4	26.0		112.8
1956	38.9	21.7	43.3	39.3	31.9	25.0	26.0	43.5	25.4	36.2	38.7	35.6	17.4	48.8	40.6	36.8	23.2	21.2	19.0	87.8	24.4	17.0	26.0		98.3
1957	36.6	21.4	44.2	35.9	30.9	23.0	26.4	47.2	25.7	33.8	44.1	33.1	16.9	50.0	40.0	38.6	24.2	20.5	18.4	87.9	24.0	17.8	23.0		101.5
1958	36.2	20.5	40.7	31.3	30.2	22.0	27.1	42.5	27.9	31.5	39.0	35.4	18.7	48.2	34.5	34.7	23.3	20.0	18.5	84.0	23.4	15.9	22.0		86.4
1959	34.4	21.5	39.8	30.3	28.4	22.0	26.4	42.3	24.5	29.6	40.6	32.0	16.3	45.4	33.7	37.3	23.8	18.7	18.1	88.6	23.1	16.6	22.0		92.0
1960	33.8	20.2	37.5	31.1	27.3	22.0	26.0	35.5	23.6	27.4	40.0	29.3	13.0	43.9	30.7	31.5	22.5	18.9	17.9	77.5	22.4	16.6	21.0		87.7
1961	32.0	19.5	32.7	28.0	27.2	22.0	25.3	37.4	21.0	25.7	39.8	30.5	19.5	40.7	28.6	26.2	22.7	17.9	17.0	88.7	22.1	15.8	21.0		82.0
1962	29.3	20.4	32.8	27.5	27.6	20.0	25.3	32.5	20.8	25.7	40.3	29.1	17.0	41.8	26.4	31.1	20.4	17.7	17.0	78.5	22.4	15.4	21.0	165.0	84.2
1963	27.1	19.5	31.3	27.1	26.3	19.0	25.2	32.0	20.5	25.5	39.2	26.6	17.0	40.1	23.2	28.6	19.6	16.9	15.8	73.1	21.7	15.4	20.0		77.5
1964	25.3	19.1	29.2	25.3	24.7	19.0	24.8	30.9	18.2	23.4	35.8	26.7	17.5	36.1	20.4	29.8	19.1	16.4	14.8	68.9	20.6	14.2	19.0		75.8
1965	23.8	18.5	28.3	23.6	23.6	19.0	24.7	29.5	17.0	21.9	34.3	25.2	15.0	36.0	18.5	24.0	19.5	16.8	14.4	64.9	19.6	13.3	18.0		71.5
1966	23.6	18.7	28.1	24.7	23.1	17.0	23.7	32.3	15.0	21.7	33.9	24.9	13.6	34.7	19.3	26.8	17.6	14.5	14.7	64.6	19.6	12.6	17.0		62.1
1967	22.8	18.3	26.4	22.9	22.0	16.0	22.4	29.9	14.8	20.7	34.3	24.4	12.9	32.2	14.9	20.4	18.0	14.8	13.4	59.2	18.8	12.9	17.0		62.1
1968	22.6	17.8	25.5	21.7	20.8	16.0	21.8	28.4	14.4	20.4	34.4	21.0	14.0	32.7	15.3	16.7	18.6	13.7	13.6	61.1	18.7	13.1	16.0		58.6
1969	23.2	17.9	25.4	21.2	19.3	15.0	20.7	26.4	14.3	19.6	31.8	20.6	11.6	30.8	14.2	17.3	16.8	13.8	13.2	55.8	18.6	11.7	15.0		57.3
1970	23.4	17.9	25.9	21.0	18.8	14.0	20.0	24.4	13.2	18.2	29.6	19.5	13.2	29.5	13.1	24.6	16.7	12.7	12.7	58.0	18.5	11.0	15.0		55.5
1971	23.1	17.3	26.1	20.3	17.5	14.0	19.1	22.7	12.7	17.2	26.9	18.0	12.9	28.5	12.4	22.2	16.5	12.8	12.1	49.8	17.9	11.1	14.0		49.5
1972	22.5	16.5	25.2	18.8	17.1	12.0	18.5	19.9	12.0	16.0	27.3	18.0	11.3	27.0	11.7	13.8	15.6	11.8	11.7	41.4	17.5	10.8	13.0		44.4
1973		16.7	23.8	16.9	15.5	11.0	17.7	18.8		15.4	24.1	18.0	9.6		11.3	15.1		11.9	11.5	44.8		9.9	13.0		44.0
1974			23.5	16.1		11.0	16.5	16.7		14.6	23.9				10.8			10.4	11.3			9.6	12.0		
1975			20.5																				11.0		

Source : H. Le Bras, Child and Family. Demographic Developments in the OECD Countries, op. cit.

The spread of birth control techniques, the virtual disappearance of the risk of losing a child, less fear of dreaded diseases (such as poliomyelitis) have generally modified the practical concerns connected with having children today. It is not surprising either that the matter of children's education should be seen by the post-war generations in quite a different light from that even of the preceding generation, and that it should be one of the topics least discussed between parents and married children because of their widely divergent attitudes to this subject (12).

This generally positive picture, however, also contains negative elements that should not be disregarded. Starting with the most important point: infant mortality, despite the rapid improvement in recent years, has not yet really been overcome. The incidence varies considerably as between OECD Member countries. A further point is that analysis of infant deaths in the United States indicates a disproportionately high number within the minority populations. This shows that general or normative figures may mask considerable variation within a population.

The differences are even more pronounced with respect to the socio-economic status of the head of the family. For example (table 7), infant mortality rates for children born in France in 1959 and 1960 with respect to father's socio-occupational category were as follows:

Table 7

INFANT MORTALITY RATE FOR CHILDREN BORN IN FRANCE IN 1959 AND 1960
ACCORDING TO FATHER'S SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY
(per 1,000 live births)

Socio-occupational category	Infant mortality total
Businessmen in industry	15.6
Teachers in high schools and universities, writers, scientists	16.1
Senior executives	16.1
Members of the professions (doctors, pharmacists, dentists, notaries, barristers, etc.)	16.6
Traders	17.7
Middle management	18.1
Primary school teachers, medical and social workers	18.5
Shop and office workers	22.3
Small traders	23.4
Artisans	24.1
Skilled workers and foremen	25.4
Seamen and fishermen	27.4
Farmers	27.5
Semi-skilled workers	29.4
Farm workers	31.7
Labourers	40.5
Miners	40.6
FRANCE	27.4

Source: A. Monnier, "La mortalité", in La population de la France, CICRED monograph, Paris, 1974.

Table 8

INFANT MORTALITY RATE IN ITALY, ACCORDING TO THE MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (1971-72)

Regions	Still-birth				Infant mortality			
	No formal schooling completed	Primary school completed	First cycle of secondary schooling completed	Degree	No formal schooling completed	Primary school completed	First cycle of secondary schooling completed	Degree
Lombardia	17.8	11.2	8.1	7.7	87.2	25.5	19.8	10.6
Umbria	17.2	13.2	10.6	9.0	33.2	22.5	15.3	15.9
Campania	30.1	20.8	14.5	15.0	96.6	37.5	32.7	13.6
Calabria	25.7	19.5	13.8	14.0	49.7	28.8	38.5	9.9
Total Italy	24.6	14.7	10.1	10.0	58.8	28.4	21.9	11.7

Source: ISTAT, 1975: Tendenze evolutive della mortalità infantile in Italia. Annuali di Statistica, vol. 29, Rome.

There is also known to be a strong correlation between infant mortality and the mother's educational level, as is confirmed by the data relating to Italy (table 8). Finally, amongst working women great differences are to be seen depending on the mother's working conditions.

These observations can be summed up very simply by saying that infant mortality is not randomly distributed and that in certain social groups, notably the most disadvantaged, it is easier to lose a child than in well-to-do circles. Commenting upon the principal causes of death among children from one to fourteen years old analysed according to the head of household's socio-occupational category (tables 9 and 10), a United Kingdom Report of the Committee on Child Health Services states in 1976:

> "With very few exceptions, the rates are highest for social class IV and V. Equivalent data based on the 1971 census is not yet available but it is expected that, despite the fall in mortality between 1961 and 1971, the social class differences will broadly remain. More recent data on perinatal mortality has just become available which supports this and shows that although perinatal mortality rates have fallen since 1949 for all social classes the social class differences remain and have if anything widened."

Table 9

PERINATAL MORTALITY RATES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
(ENGLAND AND WALES) BY SOCIAL CLASS
(legitimate single births only) - 1950 and 1973

Social class	1950	1973	Percentage decrease 1950-73
I. Professional	25.4	13.9	45
II. Managerial	30.4	15.6	49
III. Skilled	33.6	19.2	43
non-manual		17.3	
manual		19.7	
IV. Semi-skilled	36.9	21.8	41
V. Unskilled	40.4	26.8	34
All social classes (including armed forces, students, etc.)	34.9*	18.9	46

*) Estimated.

Source: Office of Population Census and Statistics, London.

Table 10

NUMBER OF CHILD DEATHS AND RATES
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND AND WALES) PER 100,000 PER YEAR
By age and social class - 1959-1963

Age		Social class				
		I	II	III	IV	V
All causes						
1-4	Numbers	436	1,329	6,147	2,324	1,521
	Rates	69.0	73.4	88.7	93.3	154.0
5-9	Numbers	209	818	3,243	1,234	744
	Rates	32.8	35.1	41.1	41.1	66.6
10-14	Numbers	173	823	2,771	1,091	555
	Rates	29.6	28.8	31.3	30.3	41.4

Source: Office of Population Census and Statistics, London.

So, the risks at birth are unequally distributed and there remain distinct differences between social classes. Does this have any consequences for children, their development, their relations with parents and entourage? It is difficult to know; but one might hope that the public will be better informed on this situation and that the appropriate measures will be planned to counter them.

ii) Medical care

Disparities also remain in the area of medical care during early childhood. One has the impression that different social strata do not profit in the same way or to the same extent from the facilities available and the advances made in pediatrics. An American report on the functioning of medical care for children, which examines, amongst other things, the number of examinations, where they take place, the regularity of care and the persons to whom people go for care, concludes with the following observation:

> "The data support the notion that American children use a widely dispersed system of care, with a substantial split between the private and public sectors and between preventive and acute care providers. The primary care system for the poor remains largely separate from the system for the affluent, with the poor more apt to use public and clinic-based care while the affluent tend to use private office-based and pediatrician care. It is further apparent that there is a greater fragmentation of preventive and acute care for the poor, who tend to seek occasional care at hospitals and GP (general practioners) offices but are less likely to have a regular source of care and for preventive care must rely on public agency services based in health departments and

> schools. By contrast, for affluent and suburban children, one private pediatrician often provides all basic services except in cases of emergency" (13).

In the German report prepared for the CERI project on Early Childhood Care and Education, the same situation is described, but it is emphasized that the consequences are all the more serious because the disadvantaged are the very people who have the greatest need. In this same report, a passage based on a study of families with handicapped children says:

> "as regards welfare and assistance measures, it is noted that in this domain too, the factors social education, income bracket, assessment of the severity of the handicap and general educative attitude remain dominant: families belonging to the lower income brackets are more rarely assisted than the more affluent: 41.8 per cent of lower income families do not take advantage of the assistance offered, while the corresponding group amongst the affluent only amounts to 9.9 per cent. In the upper income groups 7.7 per cent more families - with respect to the lower income groups - receive allowances to cover transport costs. Furthermore, only 29.5 per cent of the lower income families claim the income tax relief offered, compared with 82.6 per cent in the top income bracket".

It could thus be said that, despite advances made in the domain of child health and welfare, there are still children who are left behind from the start. Inadequate care, poor nutrition, higher risk of disease, together with unsuitable accommodation and situations of hopelessness and abandonment (low social status, futility of any attempt to improve living conditions) do not constitute favourable conditions for the harmonious development of children or for the action of even the best-intentioned educative and social programmes.

iii) The case of handicapped children

After having for many years excluded handicapped children from social life (unlike in older societies where the presence of handicapped people was a normal part of everyday existence), modern societies are starting to change their ways and a new awareness is becoming apparent. It is difficult to say whether there are fewer handicapped children today than formerly. Certainly, advances in medicine and delivery techniques have brought about a reduction in the number of accidents at birth, one of the principal causes of handicap, but at the same time, thanks to these advances, a great many delicate children who formerly would have died, especially those with serious mental deficiencies, have increased chances of survival (14).

Although, for various reasons and in particular the diversity of the criteria used, it is difficult to know exactly how many handicapped there are, they form a numerous group (15), and as a result it is becoming (or perhaps once more becoming) usual to live with handicapped children and to be confronted with the problems posed by their presence. Obviously, families having handicapped children are confronted with special problems, but also the education and welfare systems (i.e. the responsible authorities, specialists working for these services, administrators and finally the community which pays for them) have to cope with the challenge of accommodating children with special needs. Their existence cannot just be ignored and the solution of their problems can no longer be sought in placing them in special institutions with all the social consequences and complications that result from it. In consequence, experiments are being made in some countries with early social integration of handicapped children. In Sweden, it has even been concluded that "integration is the guiding principle in the organisation of special pre-school instruction". The relevant report goes further, asserting that "a considerable part of the problems of pre-school children are not merely or mainly individual but concern the whole family. As a consequence actions should seldom be limited to individual educational or medical treatment but should involve the family situation, once again without forgetting that many problems have their roots in the physical and social environment of the child and its family".

New policies therefore need to be adopted to counteract the practice of segregating the handicapped. It is particularly important to avoid launching narrow sectoral ones entailing the introduction of special programmes for particular groups, in the illusion that if this is done the special cases will be better provided for.

What frequently underlies current practice in the treatment of the handicapped and its consequences is the belief in a traditional methodology that purports to detect, label and treat deficiencies professionally. This explains the multiplicity of categories for classifying handicaps, efforts to develop more efficacious early detection procedures, increasing specialisation in care and treatment, all of which increases the risk of an over-emphasis on medical care for children. This point is stressed in some national reports that question the relevance of certain initiatives striving in the direction of the integration.

By contrast, the United States, in its mainstreaming programme, emphasised the development of the whole child. Mainstreaming in Head Start, which stresses comprehensive child development, is required by law to obtain federal financial support if 10 % of the children are handicapped. Public Law 94-142 requires the development of a total programme (education, welfare, health and nutrition) for children who are handicapped, mainstreaming being applied if this is possible.

5. ORGANISATION OF WORK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Through its influence on the form, rythm and quality of the life of workers, the organisation of labour in contemporary industrial societies continues to exercise a great influence on the behaviour of adults in contact with children and, indeed, on the whole of family life. It is relevant here, therefore, that we should take a critical look at working conditions and types of employment.

This topic was studied, amongst others, at the First Wolfsberg Conference on "The Child in Contemporary Society" (16) where policy issues concerning employment likely to have an influence on families and children were listed as follows:

- Employment-related geographical mobility patterns of the family;
- Parental unemployment (of one parent in a two parent family, of both parents, or of the only parent in a single parent family);
- Distance between place of work and home;
- Number of working hours (part-time, full-time, overtime);
- Work schedules (day and night shifts, number of hours/day and days/work);
- Context of jobs (sex traditional or non-traditional);
- Nature of work performed (more or less tiring, more or less tedious);
- Organisation of work (flexible/inflexible, autocratic/democratic);
- The economics of equal employment opportunity (parent payments and parental leave options);
- Equal employment policies and the law.

The working group that examined some of these points found in its conclusions (17):

- the critical need for the systematic gathering of data regarding family social indicators cross-nationally;
- there are several major areas of research on family functioning in which there have been far too few policy studies;
- the idea of examining alternative public policies to gauge their relative impact on the family at a variety of ecological levels has real merit.

Available knowledge about the connection between working conditions and relations between children and adults within the household is thus fairly inadequate. Here we shall examine two aspects, the one concerning the social and affective environment of children, the other the physical environment.

i) Women's employment outside the home (18)

The increasing number of women who are gainfully employed has a considerable effect on the functioning and daily routine of households and families and, in particular, parents with children. The phenomenon is more or less marked according to the country, but presents the same character everywhere, namely a very considerable increase in female labour in the tertiary sector. Thus, in the United Kingdom it has been noted that between 1911 and 1966 the number of white-collar workers increased by 176 per cent, clerical occupations grew by 292 per cent, while the number of manual workers increased by only 5 per cent, having actually decreased in total since 1931. The proportion of women among manual workers generally in 1966 was much the same as in 1911. The proportion of women has increased most dramatically in white-collar occupations, from 29.8 per cent in 1911 to 46.5 per cent in 1966 (A. H. Halsey, 1976).

Table 11 gives an idea of the spectacular rise in the number of married women gainfully employed in the United Kingdom during a 50-year period.

Table 11

MARRIED FEMALE ACTIVITY RATES
Great Britain

	%		%
1921	8.7	1961	29.7
1931	10.0	1971	42.3
1951	21.7	1975	47.9

Source: Department of Employment Gazette, June 1977.

Table 12 shows the evolution of trends in married female activity since 1960. There is a noticeable increase everywhere, except in Japan, of their increase in the labour force.

This phenomenon reflects a change in the recognised function of married women in industrial societies, particularly on the following points:

- Maternity is increasingly less thought to be the sole task of an adult woman; a majority of women is looking to other activities.
- The number of adult women whose full-time job is looking after home and children is diminishing.
- Household chores are still done for the most part by women, who thus combine two activities, one in the home and the other outside. This is often a cause of serious fatigue or exhaustion. Numerous

Table 12

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE OF MARRIED WOMEN, 1960-1975

Year	United States	Germany	United Kingdom	Japan	Sweden
1960	30.48				
1961	32.74				
1962	32.72	33.5			
1963	33.72	33.3	34.38	50.12	47.0
1964	34.39	33.1	35.16	49.79	46.8
1965	34.72	33.7	36.14	49.77	47.2
1966	35.46	34.6	37.68	50.04	49.3
1967	36.80	33.3	37.71	50.26	49.8
1968	38.28	34.1	38.41	49.60	51.8
1969	39.59	34.5	39.36	48.71	53.4
1970	40.79	35.6	39.82	48.37	56.1
1971	40.78	36.2	39.18	46.98	58.2
1972	41.48	37.7	40.73	46.28	59.8
1973	42.23	38.9		47.05	61.2
1974		39.0			63.6
1975		39.1			66.2

Source: Calculated using data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Department of Economics and Statistics, Labour Force Statistics. These data differ from the total participation rates. They are derived using the number of married women in the total labour force (including the armed forces) divided by the total population of women fifteen years and over.

Table 13

MARRIED FEMALE ACTIVITY RATES
Great Britain (in %)

Age	1961	1971	1976	1986 (estimated)
20-24	41.4	46.7	54.6	55.7
25-34	29.5	38.4	47.8	51.5
35-44	36.4	54.5	66.4	73.8
45-54	35.3	57.0	66.3	76.0

Source: Department of Employment.

studies have drawn attention to the high rate of depressive states and the high consumption of drugs and sedatives amongst the female population (Tizard and Mantovani, 1981). It is obvious that under these conditions relationships with the children can scarcely be idyllic and the time and attention devoted to them are more and more restricted.

- The role of women in the productive system has always been important, especially in rural areas. In peasant households, there has always been a fairly rigid division of tasks, assigning particular productive occupations to women. Furthermore, even the children had certain tasks to perform, as also the aged persons who often had to look after the little ones. Reduction of the peasant population in the industrialised countries has profoundly changed the living conditions of a significant percentage of children. Nevertheless, there still remain sizeable peasant communities in several Member countries. It is obvious that education and health problems for the children of these communities are not the same as those of children living in industrial centres or urban areas. This is not to say that they are simpler. Suitable solutions need to be studied that are not mere reproductions of measures applied in the urban context.

Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that a proportion of the female labour in the secondary and tertiary sectors is composed of women coming from a rural background. Consequently, in addition to the general problems associated with female employment, there are difficulties caused by the transition from one culture to another, from one type of mentality to another, and this has its effect on the life of the household and relationships with the children.

- The number of women who actually give up working life for a certain time in order to look after their children is diminishing. This is confirmed by the statistics (19). The ratio of working mothers with young children to working mothers with older children varies according to the country and according to the year (see, for example, figures concerning the United Kingdom in table 13). The number of women who take up work or study again after bringing up their children is also on the rise. All these observations go to show that for a growing proportion of women with children, or liable to have them, the home is less and less the centre of their lives, and in any event no longer represents the place where they achieve fulfilment as adults. The upshot of all this is that households are in urgent need of substantial supportive measures for educating the children.

- Equal rights for men and women in economic life, although officially recognised everywhere, are not always upheld in practice. For example, other things being equal, women have less chance than men of finding a job or being promoted. In the United States in 1976, 34.8 per cent of women between 20 and 24 had not been integrated into working life, while amongst men the figure was only 13.6 per cent. Family responsibilities were given as the reason for non-participation by 22.2 per cent of the women and 0.1 per cent of the men.

Taking the 16-19 age group, the difference is not so great, but still considerable (49.9 per cent of the girls and 39 per cent of the boys do not belong to the labour force) and already family responsibilities are the principal reason given by girls for non-participation (20).

In general terms, it appears that women, and especially young women, are often discriminated against with regard to remuneration, security and quality of employment. It might be supposed, though precise data to demonstrate it are not available, that this situation where many aspirations are frustrated does nothing to help the acceptance of motherhood and the responsibility for young children.

- In fine, a closer analysis of the situation of those women who look after the home and children full-time would appear to be necessary. It is known that a proportion of them (the exact number is difficult to estimate) either regularly or intermittently do some other sort of job on the side, such as non-registered baby-minding, cleaning, or various kinds of out-work. These activities can become very time-consuming, turn into veritable forced labour and considerably extend the woman's working day. In such cases one might wonder what sort of benefit the children can derive from having their mother at home all day. These mothers (who stay at home but do some work on the side) end up just as worn-out, dissatisfied and tense as other working women.

Another phenomenon that is profoundly changing the functioning of family life and the educational conditions of children is the gainful employment of married women. Only 50 years ago, in most industrialised countries policies were aimed at encouraging women to stay at home, whereas in the early days of industrialisation women (with the children) had constituted a large part of the workforce. In recent years, the orientation has changed once again with a return of women to working life (table 14). What was considered to be "normal" for the women of the early twentieth century generations, i.e. to see themselves solely as housewives and mothers (so that a girl's education was essentially limited to an apprenticeship to domestic work) has become exceptional today.

Table 14

ACTIVITY RATES FOR MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE

Year	Sweden	United States	Denmark	Italy	Canada
1960		18.6			
1965	37				
1972		30.1			47.4
1973			50	40	
1974	57				
1976	66				

Source: Equal Opportunities for Women, OECD, Paris, 1979.

In this regard, it is probable that female activity rates will further increase in the future with only a few countries (Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Yugoslavia) expecting a reduction in the next few years (OECD, 1979). At present (table 15), the average female activity rate in the OECD countries amounts to 46.2 per cent, while that of men is 87.7 per cent. Nevertheless, should present trends persist, one can foresee a situation where the activity rate of women will be similar to that of men, i.e. there will be as many women as men working.

It might be objected that these forecasts take no account of the effects of recession on employment and in particular of the growth of unemployment. But it would be an illusion to imagine that it will be possible in the future to oblige married women to give up gainful employment because of the economic situation.

Trends in fertility rates, birth control practices and the gainful employment of mothers could combine to give women's lives a rather different pattern from that of the past. Pregnancies could be grouped instead of being spread over a long period, the time devoted by mothers to having children could be reduced and the time given to work, education, leisure activities and to looking for work could be much greater than that devoted to motherhood and housework. It would be important then, to determine if a development of this sort has any effects on educational practices, and thus to define them.

It cannot, of course, be stated categorically that this situation is in itself detrimental to children's education, or that the decrease in the importance of motherhood and the larger place in the lives of women given to working life necessarily means a decreased investment of time and energy in children's education. Nevertheless, if working life is to provide an enriching experience and have a liberating value that favours interaction with the children, and hence their education, there must be changes in working hours and the quality of employment and facilities must be developed for the care and education of young children. If these things happen, a mother's employment can benefit both herself and her children.

ii) Housing conditions

The influence that the dwelling has on the life of households and especially children (among the main users) must not be underestimated. The Second Report on Families by the German Ministry for Youth, The Family and Health, put it in a nutshell: "the dwelling is the central point of family life. If we speak here only of the needs of children as regards housing, it is because one can say that children's lives depend very much on the home and its immediate environment. In fact, adults have the opportunity to operate in other places also, which gives them a great independence with respect to the family's dwelling".(21)

Table 15

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF WOMEN AND MEN, 1975

(Female and male labour force as a percentage of the
respective female or male population aged 15-64)
(percentages)

Country	Women	Men
Australia	48.5	88.8
Austria	48.0	84.4
Belgium	43.9	83.8
Canada	50.0	86.2
Denmark	63.5	89.8
Finland	65.6	79.7
France	56.5	84.4
Germany	48.5	85.7
Greece	30.8	82.7
Iceland	45.1	93.9
Ireland	33.5	92.1
Italy	30.7	81.2
Japan	51.7	89.6
Luxembourg	31.1	85.5
Netherlands	26.9 (a)	83.9 (a)
New Zealand	39.0	88.0
Norway	53.3	85.9
Portugal	32.0	94.4
Spain	32.5	87.6
Sweden	67.6	89.2
Switzerland	54.6	94.6
Turkey	53.2	92.8
United Kingdom	55.3	91.5
United States	53.1	85.3
Yugoslavia	46.4	85.4
Average	46.2	87.7

a) Labour force expressed in man-years.

Source: OECD data.

The quality of the dwelling and its environment can affect children's development and health, determine their practical experiences, and structure social learning.

Obviously, the nature of the dwelling has an influence, but also the building and the district. The dwelling cannot be isolated from its context; the organisation of life within the household is subject to the pressures of the district and is determined according to each family's particular network of social and economic relationships. It is rather surprising to find how little attention is paid to this familiar environment of children in the technical literature, as if it were an insignificant variable. Space and safety aspects of housing certainly affect mothers' attitudes and practices about controlling or allowing physical activity and unsupervised play. A frequently expressed parental need is to have a safe place for children to play. Studies on the interaction between housing conditions and inter-family relations on the one hand, and children's development on the other, are not numerous either. In the German Ministry's Second Report on Families, where a very well documented chapter (chapter VIII) has been devoted to this problem, it is significantly stated that "the exact scientific demonstration of the effect of housing conditions on the outcome of the socialisation process has yet to be made, as is also the case with the connection between the family's economic situation and socialisation", but it is also stated that "the factors 'dwelling' and 'environment of the dwelling' exercise an influence on the process of socialisation".

When discussing housing conditions, there are thus at least three principal factors to be considered as having major effects on the lives of families and households: architectonic structure (layout of the rooms, movement within the dwelling, type and number of rooms), quality of the dwelling (area, lighting, sound-proofing, etc.), environment. Variations in these factors are expressed in rents, which allows us to say that there is a correlation between income level and type of housing occupied. Incomes determine the ability to choose as regards the quality and environment of the dwelling. In the German report already cited, we find that "An analysis of the distribution of dwellings according to family incomes reveals the dependence which exists: the higher the family income, the higher the ratio occupying adequate dwellings; the bigger the family, the higher the ratio inadequately housed."

Since income depends on employment, there is a strong correlation between the organisation of labour, which creates employment opportunities, and housing conditions. The dwelling is chosen according to income level and, often, the place of residence according to availability of employment. The combined effect of these two criteria is the concentration of the population by social classes, occupational groups and often place of origin, forming residential districts with a sharply defined structure, their own rules and way of life, their own facilities.

This phenomenon is most apparent in urban environments. The relation between income and housing in rural areas may be different. The problems of low income rural housing may involve isolation whereas low income urban housing is often congested. It goes without saying that children's lives, hence their educational conditions, vary according to whether the whole family moves or not, the household splits up or not, and whether they live in one district rather than another, the outer suburbs or the town centre.

The same German Second Report on families lists the following groups experiencing acute housing problems resulting from the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation:

- large families
- young families

- single-parent families
- foreign workers
- families with handicapped children.

Once more it can be seen in all these cases that the environment in which the child develops is formed differently according to the material resources of the adults who look after him. This insistence on the importance of the material bases of existence should remind us that even the best of educative measures can be no more than palliatives unless supported by appropriate economic and social policies.

A final point is that the development of systems of production as well as advances in the field of health have given rise to profound changes in the children's immediate environment. In the developed countries, the steady decrease in the number of adult women who are not gainfully employed, population movements resulting from the drift from the land and the transformation of the towns, the housing market which is generally unfavourable towards the socially disadvantaged classes, the success of pre-primary schooling, the drop in infant mortality and increased life expectancy with its corollary, the multi-generation family, these are some of the transformational processes which go to form this environment. These changes, which moreover proceed at uneven rates according to the convergence or contradiction of the forces operating at any given moment, are beyond the control or comprehension of a part of the population, which to a certain extent has to submit to them. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the family should become an important place of refuge, where people can find themselves, which they can fall back on, despite the difficulty and ambiguity of exchanges between the generations. The counterpart of this affective withdrawal into the family circle is the importance acquired by the children, who become the hub about which family life turns. It is at this moment that childhood becomes an important political stake, capturing the interest of more than just educators and philanthropists.

II

A REDEFINITION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The previous chapter discussed some of the contextual variables which must be taken into account in any discussion of early childhood educational policy. This chapter has a narrower focus: pre-school education and how it is used to combat poverty and social inequality. We are ending a ten-year period of intense research, innovation, and expansion of services in this area: these activities, which developed in almost all countries during the same period, express the extent and vitality of efforts to analyse and reformulate the aims, organisation, and functions of education at this level.

Most of the latest innovations here spring from the compensatory education movement which has been the most important reform attempt in the pre-school area during the past few years. This chapter will be largely concerned, therefore, with programmes for disadvantaged children.

Still the most significant of these is the American project Head Start, which was launched at the end of 1964. On account of its ambitious aims and the methods employed to achieve them, its duration as well as the difficulties encountered, this project must be considered one of the most interesting experiments in the field of pre-school education in recent years. The arguments over the issues raised and the results obtained (22), the number of research projects (23), and experiments carried out within the framework of Head Start, demonstrate its importance and the interest aroused by it. The special features of this project, as well as its theoretical and political implications, raise issues that are not limited to the situation in the United States. They are therefore of interest to those who operate in the pre-school sector in all OECD Member countries.

Head Start is a pre-school education project designed for the children of low-income families (only 15 per cent of the children entitled to it took part) which began as a demonstration but developed into a nation-wide organisation. Its performance was limited primarily by its budget (24); nevertheless, despite this limitation, Head Start is significant, and for two main reasons:

- it was the first attempt to carry out compensatory education experiments on a large scale;
- it gave birth to a new conception of educational work in the pre-school milieu.

Discussions on the development of pre-school education in all Member countries during the past ten years take this project as their common reference point. The main conclusions emerging from both American and European innovations and experiments following Head Start, demand, therefore, the special attention that follows.

1. COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROJECTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Basically, the issue at stake is the contribution that pre-school education can make in an education system tuned to the needs of higly industrialised societies. At the beginning of the 60s, it was still believed that these societies needed to make the best possible use of their human capital if they were to survive, and consequently the high school failure rate for working-class children was unacceptable.

From this point of view, pre-primary education was seen as the proper method of compensating for what used to be called "starting handicaps". It prepared children for going to school, taught them to adapt to it through the acquisition of the basic rules of school behaviour and assimilation of the codes of school language. The educative process should lead to success at school, and this, so the reasoning went, was the precondition for success in life.

This belief led to the study of the medium- and long-term effects of pre-school education programmes aimed at children from the disadvantaged social classes. If a clear correlation could be demonstrated between attending a nursery school and subsequent school results, it would constitute an irrefutable argument in favour of a policy of systematic development of nursery schools. This question has been carefully analysed by White and his co-workers (25) in their examination of United States Federal programmes for young children. The authors examined a selection of pre-school intervention programmes and arrived at this conclusion: "There is an immediate increase in I.Q. score for most pre-school projects. This may reflect genuine intellectual progress or it could reflect familiarity with the situation, greater self-confidence or an increased willingness in test taking. Differences in I.Q. gains vary widely with some gains much larger than others."

The effects of most pre-school projects on I.Q. scores do not persist beyond the second or third grade. Immediate improvements in performance are found on achievement tests from pre-school projects which focus on specific skills. In some cases they persist longer than I.Q. increases but typically they decline in a manner parallel to that of I.Q. scores. The pattern of improvement in specific content areas generally reflects the pattern of concentration within the project. The amount of improvement varies with the explicitness of objectives, the soundness of instructional methodology, the amount of time spent attaining the objectives, and the similarity between instruction and the performance required by the tests.

In the absence of clear conclusions on this point, the problem is not so much a matter of science as of policy. The policy interpretation of the results counts more than the results as such. Stearns (1971), quoted by White, points to the three possible policy interpretations:

If the results mean that we have not enhanced the mental development of the children enough or that we have not really increased cognitive and emotional abilities which underlie intellectual achievement, then we might consider such things as:

1. not increasing large-scale pre-school expenditures until we agree on what is important, find out if it is possible to bring it about, and discover the conditions under which it can be fostered on a large scale;
2. giving the children of certain parents special stimulation from birth or from age one or two years;
3. changing the goal of the programme to day care with educational components to keep the children from regressing on the basis of what we now know, and forget the idea of accelerating development to ensure children's chances to succeed after age five.

If we get these results of pre-school intervention because the school experience does not reinforce or, in fact, contravenes the pre-school experience, then we might wish to:

1. change the goals, methods and/or content of public school programmes;
2. make pre-school programmes more compatible with existing primary programmes;
3. make both the pre-school and primary programmes plan a sequence of experiences under compatible philosophies.

If we get these results because the home environment fails to reinforce or contravenes the pre-school experience, we may wish to:

1. bring about more harmony of goals and methods between school and community;
2. remove the children from their homes for longer periods of time;
3. involve the entire community in an educational intervention (parenthood education) or other (e.g. economic, political) interventions which have effects on child rearing and schooling.

These three alternatives are very interesting from two standpoints. In the first place, they imply that if the aim is really to improve the children's lot, action must be taken concerning the family environment, the pre-school and the school. It is only by altering these three causes simultaneously that there is any likelihood of greater success for the children. Secondly, the alternatives lead to conclusions that call into question the organisation and operation of the school system in general and demonstrate the need for considerable changes if it is really desired to improve the scholastic achievements of disadvantaged children. However, these considerations were based on data available in 1972/73, and they need not necessarily be completely valid today unless confirmed by results obtained subsequently with other groups of children and, above all, with children observed over a longer period. In view of the demonstrative value attributed to longitudinal studies, it is appropriate at this point to examine some recent studies to reinforce or invalidate the conclusions drawn in 1973.

a) Longitudinal research

A study by Lazar and associates (1977) and a monograph by Weikart and his associates (1978) give interesting information based upon programmes launched in the early or mid-sixties (26) which, because of their continued sponsorship, have been repreated several times, thus involving a substantial number of children.

Researchers into 14 pre-school education projects directed by Lazar were able to find in 1977 almost two-thirds of the subjects (1,115 in all) who had participated in the programmes and to collect detailed information on their individual school careers. As compared to White, Lazar is more positive about the contribution pre-school education can make to adapting children from the disadvantaged social classes to school life, but remains just as cautious as regards the effects on cognitive ability. He comes to the following conclusions:

> "Pre-school programmes produce a long-term, although not a permanent, increase in the intellectual functioning of low income children ... Infant and pre-school services improve the ability of low income children to meet the minimal requirements of the schools they enter. This effect can be manifested in either a reduced probability of being assigned to special education classes or a reduced probability of being held back in grade. Either reduction constitutes a substantial cost reduction for the school system."
>
> "Low income adolescents who received early education rate their competence in school higher than comparable adolescents who did not have pre-school education. Probably the most important finding is that low income children who received early education are better able to meet the minimal requirements of their school. Results on I.Q. tests indicate that this may be due to an increase in intellectual skills which lasts through the very important primary grades in school."

White and associates (1973) had also noted that achievement test results as well as the scores obtained in intelligence tests by children who had followed pre-school education programmes increased considerably during and immediately after the end of these programmes; but they also pointed out that these improvements faded in the third year at school. Lazar believes that the effect of early education goes beyond the first years of schooling, although it is not clear which are the factors influencing the school performances.

b) The Ypsilanti Perry Pre-school Project

D.P. Weikart's Ypsilanti Perry Pre-school Project can be considered as one of the pioneer pre-school education projects of Head Start, as well as a typical example of the work of those promoting pre-school education in the United States. It started in 1962 after two years of planning its framework and aims being scarcely any different from those of other projects at that time - namely to demonstrate that well-designed pre-school education programmes will allow children from disadvantaged social groups to be successful at school.

Explaining the origin of his own project, Weikart says that its impetus "was the recognition that the local school system, certainly representative of the times, was unable or unwilling to promise even minor reforms to permit low-achieving children some success in school ..." Since the schools would not, or could not, change,"the plan ... was to equip high-risk children with improved abilities to cope with the demands of schooling". (Weikart, 1978, p. 3).

For research purposes the children were as usual divided into two more-or-less equal groups; an experimental group and a control, thus:

	Number of children	
	Experimental group (children)	Control group (children)
1962-63	13	15
1963-65	8	9
1963-64	12	14
1964-65	13	14
1965-66	12	13

So, a total of 123 children of pre-school age and belonging to disadvantaged social strata (they were defined as "academically high-risk pre-school-age children") took part in the project. Those in the experimental group attended a nursery school for two years and the teacher visited the families regularly once a week. At the age of five, they entered the public school (kindergarten), as did the children from the control group. From this moment, all special activity with the experimental group ceased. The intellectual development of all the children as well as their scholastic achievements were measured and evaluated regularly up to the end of the fourth year of compulsory schooling (fourth grade). The results obtained are substantially the same as those reported by White as regards academic aptitude (I.Q. and achievement tests).

Weikart's observations confirm that the experimental-group children have much less difficulty in adjusting to school life than control-group children, but more particularly show that they are much more capable of following the teaching in their normal class than the others. Among the experimental group there is less falling-behind and less transfer to special classes:

> "By third grade, however, significantly more children in the experimental group were on grade and in regular class-rooms (88 per cent in the experimental group versus 72 per cent in the control group). The magnitude of this difference continued to increase such that 83 per cent of experimental-group children, but only 62 per cent of the control-group children were on grade in regular classrooms by the end of fourth grade" (Weikart, 1978, pp. 89-90).

This result appears to Weikart to constitute a decisive argument in favour of pre-school education. If it were proven that, through attending a nursery school, the chances of having to repeat a class or of being put into a special class were significantly diminished, and that adjustment to school got better as the years went by, then there should no longer be any objections to the expansion of pre-school education. Less children lagging behind, less special classes required: all this would constitute decisive social and financial arguments in favour of such a programme. Weikart does not hesitate to draw this conclusion and states that pre-school education is a good investment.

It is another question whether the conditions that enabled these results to be obtained could readily be generalised: very small number of children per class; intensive, structured cognitive stimulation programmes, specialist teachers; weekly contact with the families through home visits; the experimental nature of most of the projects, etc. It is also important not to forget the probable favourable bias of public school teachers towards children who have participated in an experimental programme (Pygmalion effect) (Rosenthal, 1968); such bias is effective as long as the number of children attending nursery schools remains small. However, in European countries where there has long been a very high rate of attendance at nursery schools (France and Belgium), the very favourable context that is typical of the American experiments no longer exists, so it is interesting to look at the results obtained there at the end of pre-school education.

2. EXPERIMENTS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Looking at the situation in Europe, two points have to be made at the outset:

- research projects and especially experiments in this field were generally few in number and concentrated in just a few countries;
- the approach to problems posed by pre-school education must be different from that employed in the United States, because of differences in the conception of its social function.

It is mainly in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom that research has been carried out into compensation and stimulation programmes and analyses have been made of the ways in which nursery schools operate. In 1973, the Council of Europe organised the Educational Research Symposium on the Social-Culturally Handicapped (27) and in the same year an important publication of the Belgian Ministry for National Education and French Culture (28) reported the findings of four Belgian inter-university projects set up to determine the origins of cognitive and affective handicaps that can be attributed to socio-cultural conditions, and to define the theoretical bases and optimal form of a pre-school programme that should, above all, prevent these.

Other experiments are being carried out in Anglo-Saxon countries, based on the same ideas. They will be briefly mentioned after consideration of the French analyses, which should come first as their nature and dimensions clearly outweigh such work elsewhere.

a) French analyses

The efficacy of nursery education has been studied in France with particular reference to the large number of children who have to repeat years or otherwise fall behind in primary education. The research carried out is completely different from American or British studies, on account of the great popularity of pre-school education in France. There was no need to prove its value to convince the French authorities of the need to set up nursery schools. What had to be done was to find out how they could be made more efficient so as to reduce subsequent school failure. For this reason, instead of setting up specific experimental pre-school projects with structured teaching programmes reserved for limited groups of children preselected on the basis of their handicaps or their belonging to a disadvantaged environment, the French studies endeavour to analyse the effects of large-scale pre-school education on later success at school by means of sociological surveys of very extensive cross-sections of the school population.

- The Valenciennes research

One of the most extensive studies was carried out under the aegis of the Ministry of National Education in the Valenciennes school district in 1973 (18). It involved 40,212 primary school pupils and addressed two fundamental questions:

i) is nursery school education capable of attenuating the social and family handicaps that weigh on children's schooling?

ii) to what extent can it succeed in this?

These questions arose out of the high rate of backwardness at school in an area where virtually all the children (95.1 per cent) had received some kind of pre-primary education, though for differing periods of time. The duration of nursery schooling was distributed as follows:

Percentage of children who:					
Did not receive pre-primary education	Received less than one year or an unknown period	Attended nursery school during:			
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years
5	5	11	24	41	11

Backwardness (difference between the child's age and the normal age for a given class) was distributed as follows (percentages):

Years behind	Years of compulsory school			
	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1	23.2	24.0	20.2	13.7
2	7.3	5.6	2.5	1.1
3	1.8	1.0	0.5	0.2
Total backward	32.3	30.6	23.2	15.0

The progressive reduction in the number of backward children as one moves from one class to the next is due to selection, the most backward pupils being taken out of the primary school at the end of third year and directed into special adaptation classes in the first year of secondary education, thus leaving their primary education incomplete.

Analysis of the age structure from one class to the next gives the following percentages of children who are older than the standard age:

1st year	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
27.9	42.1	48.2	50.9	49.6

Roughly a third of the pupils lag behind at the end of the first year of compulsory schooling, almost half by the end of the fifth year.

Backwardness at the end of the first year of compulsory schooling according to the socio-occupational category of the father was distributed as follows:

Table 16

BACKWARDNESS AT THE END OF THE FIRST YEAR OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLING ACCORDING TO SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

Socio-occupational category	Distribution of pupils between the categories		Percentage of backward children in each category	Number included in the analysis
Farmers	1.5	1.5	11.4	438
Seniors executives	4.7	14.7	4.7	1,406
Middle management	10.0		8.8	3,006
Traders, artisans	4.4	14.4	16.8	1,306
Shop and office workers	6.7		16.3	2,001
Service personnel	3.3		18.1	991
Skilled workers, foremen	31.3	69.4	24.4	9,379
Semi-skilled workers, labourers	25.2		36.8	7,563
Miners	9.4		42.2	2,821
Pensioners	3.4		42.0	1,021
Deceased	0.1		53.5	43
Total	100 %	100 %		29,975

It must be admitted that the figures are impressive. The study attempts to explain this phenomenon with a very detailed analysis of the social structure of repeaters, establishing correlations with a whole series of social factors: parents' occupations, ethnic origin, number of children in the family, conditions of pre-primary schooling, type of school attended, family situation, interest shown by the parents in the child's studies, frequency of contact with teachers, teacher's experience.

Two main datum points were fixed: one at the end of the first year of compulsory schooling, and the other at the end of the fifth year at school. The results obtained confirm the observations made elsewhere, i.e.:

1) The more nursery school education a child has received, the less difficulties he meets during the first year of primary school.

Duration of pre-primary education	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years
Backwardness at the end of the first year	30 %	14.7 %	9.2 %
	-15.3 %		-5.5 %
Differences	-20.8 %		

ii) The influence of nursery schooling does not last beyond the first year at school. The advantages wear off fairly quickly and by the end of the period, in the fifth class, there is very little difference between the children who have succeeded in continuing after the first class.

These conclusions are confirmed by the results of another analysis (table 17) carried out under the aegis of the Ministry of National Education with a sample of 37,000 children and which gives the following results:

Table 17

DURATION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND REPEATING (9)

Duration of pre-school education	0.6 months	6 months to 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years
Number of children	7,081	8,166	11,271	9,257	1,775
As a percentage	18.9	21.7	30.0	24.7	4.7
Level of repeating in primary school	56.2	51.6	44.7	39.7	38.3
Difference (10)		-4.6	-6.9	-5.0	-1.4

The authors of the Valenciennes study presenting their conclusions, point out that despite the high proportion of children with pre-school education, 32 per cent still have to repeat at the end of the first primary class. This provoked the comment: "looking at the 30 per cent of children that are lagging behind at the end of the preparatory year in the Valenciennes district, one can console oneself by saying that without nursery schools it might be 45 per cent. Depending on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist, it is the 30 per cent or the 45 per cent that you will remember". (31)

- The SRESAS research

Failures and difficulties at school are very common, but at the same time selective, demonstrating the presence of a serious problem of inadaptation to school, which is on the increase despite the extension

Table 18

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN EXAMINED AND DIRECTED TO SPECIAL CLASSES

Schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
Number of children examined[1]	16	6	22	20	29	18	12	9	11	17	13	21	11	-	12	219
Directed to special classes	12	3	11	3	0	6	4	2	11	16	4	1	4	-	0	77
Percentage	66.7	50	50	15		33.3	33.3	22.2	100	94.1	30.7	4.8	36.4			33.16
Presence of special classes in the school itself	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	9

Source: SRESAS.

of pre-primary education. It is therefore necessary to seek an explanation that takes into account not only individual differences (an unsatisfactory explanation when one considers that half the children are in difficulties), but also the role of schools and pre-school services. An important analytical programme along these lines has been made by the SRESAS (Section de recherche de l'éducation spécialisée et de l'adaptation scolaire) de l'INRP (Institut national de recherche pédagogique).

A longitudinal survey covering 1,238 children constituting the population of the "grandes sections" (the nursery school groups containing the oldest children) of 15 nursery schools in Paris and the suburbs during the 1969-70 school year allowed their progress to be followed over two years of compulsory schooling (32). From this it emerged that:

- about half the children reported by the nursery school were in difficulties in the compulsory school (43.5 per cent at the end of the first year, 43 per cent at the end of the second);
- half of those reported (50.9 per cent) were working-class children;
- there was a close link between failure at school and social origin;
- academic selection started as early as the kindergarten (some 80 per cent of the children placed in special classes come from the group reported by nursery school teachers and examined by school psychologists).

On this basis, one might advance the hypothesis that there is no essential difference between pre-primary and primary education, that in this case pre-school education is adapted to primary teaching, that in the nursery school distinctions between the children are operative, anticipating academic selection, and that this selection is essentially a social one. (Burguière, 1975).

Such observations throw a new light on pre-school education and should cause the supporters of pre-school expansion to adopt a more critical approach.

b) An experiment in Ireland

In 1969, the Ministry of Education in Dublin supported the opening of a two-year nursery school (for children from 3 to 5) whose task was to devise an experimental programme in the form of a structured curriculum aimed at developing children's cognitive aptitudes and preparing them for school work. At the same time, it was planned to evaluate the effects of this programme, checking above all the scholastic achievement of children who had taken part in pre-school education. The children were therefore tested for the last time at the end of the third year of compulsory schooling (at the age of eight). The experiment started in 1969, so it ended in 1974. 90 children were enrolled at the start of the programme and constituted the experimental group. They attended the school for 2 1/2 hours a day (morning or afternoon), divided into groups of 15. For each class there was a teacher and an assistant. Three social workers and a pediatric nurse were also attached to the experiment.

The most distinctive features of this project were these:

i) the school's location right in the centre of the town, in an extremely poor district where the human problems of poverty, unemployment and sickness were acute;

ii) the experimental group was very heterogeneous and included some of the children from the immediate locality;

iii) the presence of two control groups: one comprised 60 children of eight to nine living in the same district and tested at the start of the project, in October 1969; the other had the same number of children of the same age, but they were drawn from less disadvantaged parts of the city;

iv) the systematic efforts and even insistence on engaging the parents in the project, which gave rise to a series of special activities;

v) the public authority's taking charge of the experiment.

The evaluation of the results obtained takes into account all the experimental problems inherent in such programmes and consequently is careful in its conclusions (Kellaghan, 1977). In his report, Kellaghan gives a cautious reply to the question of the effects of pre-school education. Confirming observations already made in the United States, he points to the spectacular improvement in I.Q. during the first and second grade, but also admits that as soon as the experimental-group children transfer to the compulsory school there is a progressive decrease of the I.Q., and after three years they end up with the same I.Q. they had at the beginning of the experiment. Looking at the conclusion in isolation, one might call it a disappointing one, made all the worse by the fact that it is those children who achieved the best results who seem to retrogress the most. But another essential aspect must not be forgotten: if these children had not had the opportunity to follow the experimental cognitive stimulation programme, their test results would have been worse; they would not even have been able to maintain their initial positions.

It can thus be concluded that the experimental programme did achieve a certain measure of success. Pre-school education certainly exercises an influence in that it prevents a subsequent deterioration in the situation of children living in underdeveloped areas, but it cannot change their situation radically.

The participants in the Dublin evaluation stress this point from two aspects. On the one hand, they note that the experimental programme which initiated various activities to ensure the involvement of the parents (for example, the fathers organised a night watchman service to protect the school against vandalism) modified the children's family environment, and this seems to have constituted one of the principal factors in its success, though it is impossible to say whether it was this environment or the school that exercised the strongest influence.

On the other hand, the evaluators readily admit that the role of the environment is decisive and that children living in slum districts will never equal those from the "better" suburbs. "The longer children live in a disadvantaged area, the more unlike children living in more 'normal' environments they become." So, they are for ever "condemned" to remain behind.

c) Projects in the United Kingdom

There have also been numerous studies in the United Kingdom, mainly within the framework of two major projects (Woodhead, 1976):

i) the Educational Priority Areas (EPA) project, which extended over a period of four years (1968-69 to 1971-72) in four different areas;

ii) the Pre-School Project, started by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 1968.

These experiments were set up at the end of the sixties (as was also the case in Dublin) and they have not been followed by others, even though all the reports drew attention to the great number of questions still unresolved (e.g. correlations between intellectual development and scholastic aptitude) and stressed the need for other studies that would lead to a better understanding of compensatory strategies. As regards the main features of these programmes, it will be noted that those connected with the EPA activities are similar to those of the Dublin experiment: it consists of improving the initial schooling provision in disadvantaged areas within existing schools, developing educational programmes and involving the parents. The children taking part in these experiments are thus fairly homogeneous as regards their social, cultural and economic conditions, but are very different, at least initially, as regards their intellectual aptitudes.

The NFER programme, on the other hand, differs somewhat from the others in that, while developing within existing institutions, it is not located in areas chosen for their particular social characteristics, but concerns the "normal" nursery school public. This allows influences connected with differences in social class to be followed up.

In both these programmes the accent is on stimulation of cognitive faculties (as, indeed, is the case with the American programmes), and in particular of language, through the development of a structured and systematically applied pre-school curriculum. Here again, as in the American and Irish experiments, the children only received their pre-school education for a few hours per day.

Finally, a group of 180 children from the NFER project were able to be followed through the beginnings of compulsory schooling and tested at the end of the second year. This procedure was adopted in a single area of the EPA project (the West Riding), where the children were able to be followed to the end of the third year.

The results obtained amply confirm what is now common knowledge on this subject: the experiments are beneficial in the short run, but the progress observed in the area of cognitive aptitudes disappears fairly quickly once the children are inserted in the normal school cycle, as if the unfavourable environment once more got the upper hand.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, it could be said that the principal benefit that a child (especially a disadvantaged child) derives from his passage through a pre-school education programme is his metamorphosis into a pupil. If this transformation is successful, he will be much more likely to succeed at school. This implies that adaptation to schooling includes behaviour and values as well as intellectual ability and academic skill.

Although persistence of intellectual gains as measured by I.Q. and academic achievement are questioned, there is agreement that children who have been in intervention programmes do not fall back as often or as severely as children of disadvantaged backgrounds who have not had special treatment.

Kellaghan stated that, without pre-school education, the children who in the third year of compulsory schooling had the same I.Q. score as they had at the beginning of the programme at the age of three, would have retrogressed even more; a much earlier, and quantitatively greater, educational setback would have resulted, as is in fact to be observed at Valenciennes. Weikart, for his part, demonstrated that pre-school education at least stops too many children from being placed in special classes, because it fosters the acquisition of behaviours, and to some extent the codes, necessary for survival in the school environment.

All the observations put forward so far (Dublin, EPA, Valenciennes, NFER) agree in attaching importance to the family background and social and economic environment. The Valenciennes study even drew a profile of the child who is educationally at high risk: a working class child from a large family, with little or no nursery schooling, whose parents show no interest in his progress at school. Such children "virtually all have to repeat their first year at primary school. Thus, it must be admitted that the social milieu is all-important, since it strongly determines a set of conditions of life, behaviours and attitudes, which may or may not contravene the expectations of school".

It follows from this that the school can have only a limited effect in changing the effects of life conditions. Pre-school education for disadvantaged children is necessary as remedial prescription, but it is not sufficient. Such interventions need to be supported by intensive work in the child's immediate environment (parents and other important contacts) and accompanied by a policy of thoroughgoing social and economic reform affecting local and community structures as well as the whole social structure (Chart 3).

There are several other questions that could be addressed concerning the value of pre-school education as a transitional stage before the commencement of traditional schooling: there are, too, numerous epistemological issues that could be pursued. However, we shall forego this type of analysis and limit ourselves to the following observations:

- Evaluation of the efficacy of pre-school education is difficult and important methodological problems are still to be resolved. Such evaluation must include a sufficiently broad choice of variables that it relates the real life situations which have been found to be crucial in shaping children's behaviour.
- More attention must be given to the choice of measuring instruments, in order to ensure both validity and comparability.
- Many variables determine children's results in school. Exclusive attention to intelligence tests is questioned. It is necessary to reach consensus on a broader (more meaningful) set of objectives. In a multi-variable situation such as this the strict application of a cause and effect explanatory model would be mistaken.

There are two other critical considerations that counsel caution and make one somewhat sceptical towards the strategy used by the supporters of pre-school education. Firstly, it will be noted that all these experiments fit into an institutional point of view which gives a false picture of the real environment of young children. It is the nature of the educational institution that is the centre of the debate - the effects it has on the children who pass through it and the difficulties they encounter in adapting to its norms, languages and codes. Certainly, it is pointed out, sometimes even with precision, that external factors exercise a powerful influence upon schooling, but these factors are only dealt with in such a way that they are subordinated to the interests of the institution whose adequacy anyway must be questioned. This way of proceeding also has an important limitation: it underestimates the importance of non-institutional life in the experience of children.

Secondly, one cannot fail to note that most of the demonstrations are based on achievement tests or I.Q. Now, there is much more in children's lives than just school results. There are things like sentiments, health, pleasure, creativity to mention just a few, and not only scholastic failures. There is a certain way of living, a culture, values, which are not found in the school culture but which must not be underestimated or pushed aside, as can easily happen when attention is focused exclusively on success at school.

Finally, there remains the fact that rates of development (33) are fixed and imposed on the children who have to achieve certain results by certain times, their school careers thus being marked by so many checkpoints. The preparatory pathways of those who succeed and those who do not will therefore be compared with the aim of identifying the factors leading to success so that institutions for children can be modelled accordingly.

This also applies to other transfer points than that from nursery to primary school. A good number of studies of crèches, for example, are structured according to this concept (34). Such a procedure is full of complex implications. At each stage, important methodological and epistomological problems arise, which constitute as many controversial scientific topics as stumbling blocks to development. It is therefore becoming necessary to consider other forms of intervention that are not limited to places like schools, and, if possible, the development of better evaluation models.

In this regard, the Head Start project, despite (and perhaps also thanks to) the fact that it was conceived for a particular public, disadvantaged children, within the context of a large-scale programme in the fight against poverty, is the first major attempt to enlarge the perspective. Underlying difficulties at school there are problems of equity, of the distribution of resources, the solution of which is not just confined to the education system, but requires multiple forms of intervention, social alongside educational action. Instead of concentrating attention on the educational institution, the quality and needs of the community in which the child lives are to be considered. The school is thus perceived as part of, an element in, this community (Rein and White, 1977).

This discussion is intended to remind us that there is no educative progress without social progress. This is a radical change of viewpoint from the position held by certain pioneers who hoped to improve the condition of the working class by means of education alone. The belief now is that there will only be better education, hence better school results and progress in the cognitive and affective development of disadvantaged children, if and when there is an improvement in their living conditions.

From this point of view, the relationship between education and social reform are interpreted according to a dynamic concept: it is the interaction between community life and education that will create favourable conditions for triggering the process of acquiring instrumental knowledge and applying it in everyday life. It is in fact a question of practising a social dynamic that will integrate education into everyday experience and allow the working and disadvantaged classes to participate in the educational process. Ultimately, a transformation of this nature implies a change in the model of the distribution of power, because it implies the negotiation of new relationships between administrators, education professionals and consumers of educational services.

Head Start, and similar experiments elsewhere, in aiming to modify the relations between practitioners and users, have made it necessary to reformulate policy for children's education and have drawn attention to the fact that some of the issues are more political than educational. They cannot therefore be solved in isolation in the educational arena.

Chart 1

MULTIPLE LINES AFFECTING PRE-SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Time	Theoretical	Social situation	Practice
1940	- Importance of early years as formative of adult personality	- Depression - War years	- New educational methods - Gradual growth of private and experimental pre-schools - Kindergarten expansion - Public assistance for needy mothers
1950	- Child-mother interactions and attachment	(Women in labour force) (Refugee children) - Cold War - Return of women to the home	- Day care for working women - Group care for children - Closing of nursery centres and kindergarten
1960	- Importance of early years as formative of adult intelligence - Human capital investments	- Baby boom - Economic growth - General attention to expand educational facilities	
1970	- Social class differences - Analysis of school failure	- Social equality - Migration - Minority rights - War against poverty - Expansion of social services	- Innovation movement in pre-school education: experimental and innovative compensatory programmes for children - Kinderläden
1980	- Ethological approach - Ecology of human development - Peer group interaction among infants	- Re-entry of women in labour market - Feminism - Family concerns - Changing demography - Economic stagnation	- Extension of public schooling to early years - Volunteer movement - Experiences of social management, community democracy - Day care provision for children under 3 years

Chart 2 VARIETY OF PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

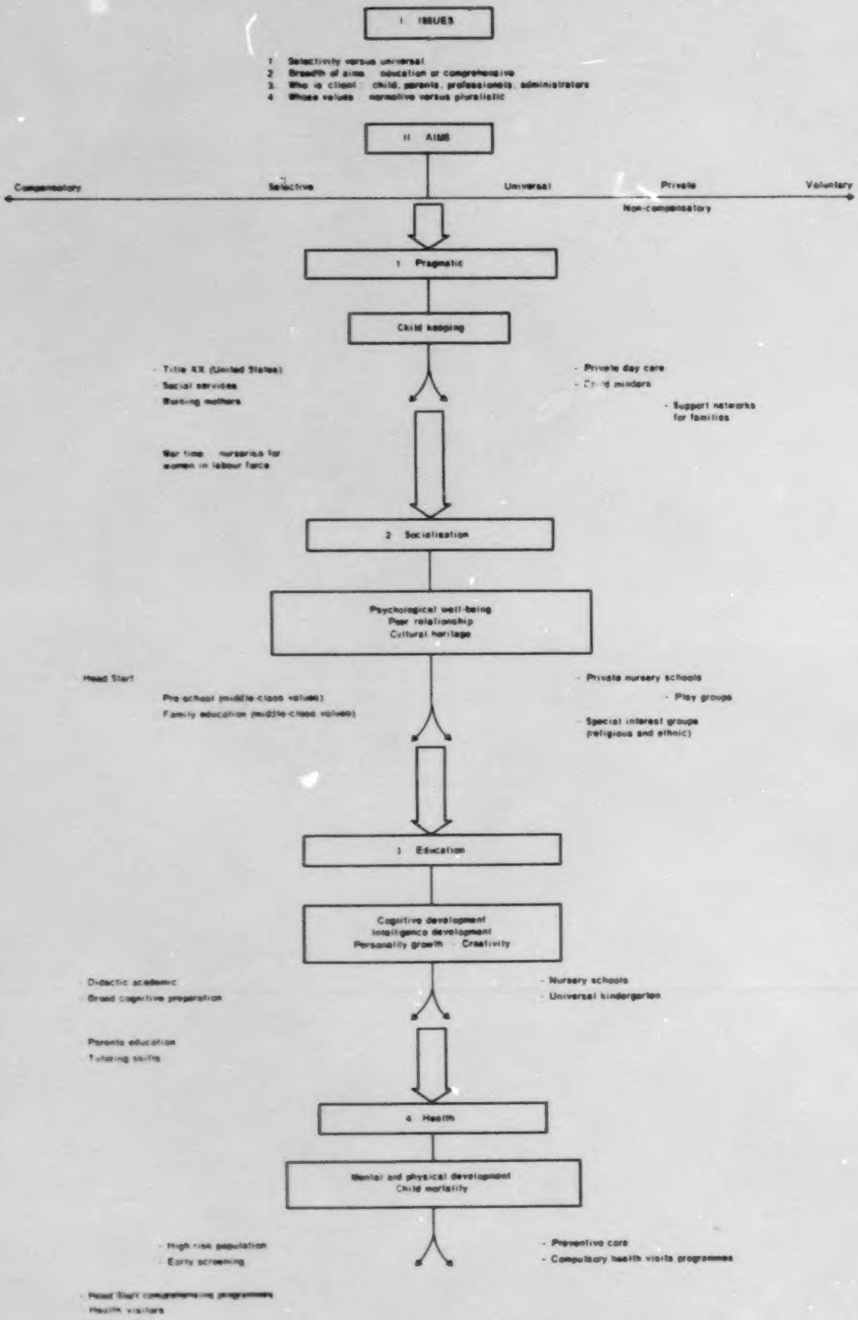
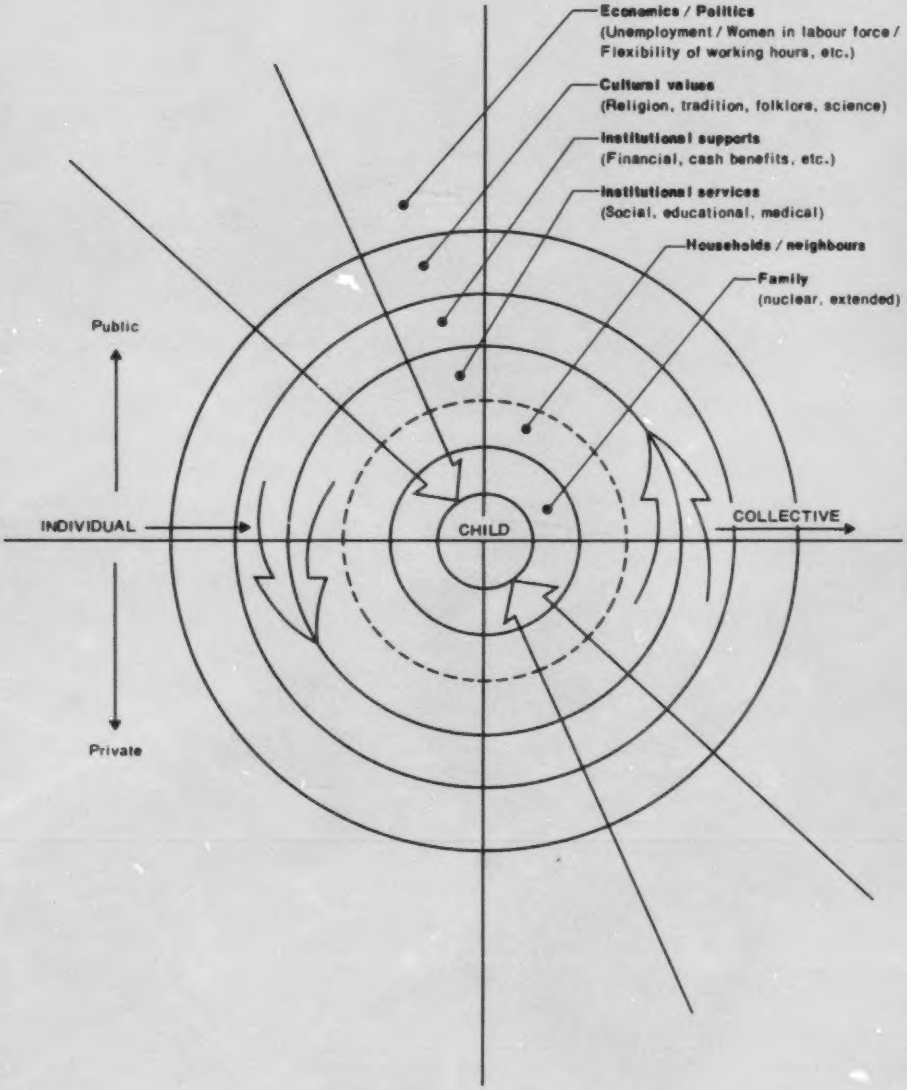

I ISSUES
1 Selectivity versus universal
2 Breadth of aims education or comprehensive
3 Who is client : child, parents, professionals, administrators
4 Whose values normative versus pluralistic
II AIMS
Compensatory
Selective
Universal
Private
Voluntary
Non-compensatory
1 Pragmatic
Child keeping
- Title XX (United States)
- Social services
- Working mothers
War time nurseries for women in labour force
- Private day care
- Child minders
- Support networks for families
2 Socialisation
Psychological well-being
Peer relationship
Cultural heritage
- Head Start
Pre-school (middle-class values)
Family education (middle-class values)
- Private nursery schools
- Play groups
- Special interest groups (religious and ethnic)
3 Education
Cognitive development
Intelligence development
Personality growth - Creativity
- Didactic academic
- Broad cognitive preparation
- Parents education
- Tutoring skills
- Nursery schools
- Universal kindergarten
4 Health
Mental and physical development
Child mortality
- High risk population
- Early screening
- Head Start comprehensive programmes
- Health visitors
- Preventive care
- Compulsory health visits programmes

Chart 3 **VARIABLES OF CHILD CARE**


Economics / Politics
(Unemployment / Women in labour force / Flexibility of working hours, etc.)
Cultural values
(Religion, tradition, folklore, science)
Institutional supports
(Financial, cash benefits, etc.)
Institutional services
(Social, educational, medical)
Households / neighbours
Family
(nuclear, extended)
Public
INDIVIDUAL
CHILD
COLLECTIVE
Private

III

PRINCIPAL POINTS OF CONTROVERSY

1. THE ABUNDANCE OF CONFLICTS

When analysing policies and institutions for children one is immediately struck by the very uneven nature of the ground. To use a meteorological metaphor, one could say that it is subject to serious disturbances and turbulence. In fact, in all countries, there are numerous, lively and intense conflicts (35), though official documents rarely mention them explicitly. These conflicts often find their origin either in divergencies of opinion between the various sections of the public administration that deal with children, in the reactions of consumers to action taken by producers of services, or in differences arising within services between administrators and the practitioners who are daily confronted in the field with widely varying problems and requests. In short, it is difficult to establish quickly unity of action embracing all interested parties when programmes, plans and facilities are being studied and set up, or even to maintain unity for very long when a service is in operation. In a sense, it can be said that a lack of consensus **is always** latent and conflicts can come into the open at any moment.

Mozère (1977) has most interestingly described how conflict situations arise and develop in the local experiments she examined in the Pont Blanc crèche on the outskirts of Paris. Conflicts also arise in administrative services and an example is offered by Hassoun (1977) who describes the gradual appearance of the tension that will oppose employers and practitioners when power relationships are called into question. Kaufmann (36), in his turn, points out that amongst the practitioners there are opposing viewpoints because the different professions - doctors, psychologists, educators, social workers - each have their own theories, and this is not without its effect on the definition of programmes of action.

Disagreement can be even more open on the policy level and can be so serious as to block the process of decision-making for considerable periods. This situation can be clearly seen in Portugal today, where conflicting opinions on the details of staff training and on the organisation of collective facilities (an integrated service accepting children from 0 to 6, or separate services for the 0 to 3 and 3 to 6 age groups) are the centre of debate within the national administration and are slowing down the establishment of the policy to be adopted. Divisions between interested parties on minor issues can prevent the formation of the alliances necessary to obtain the required majority to get development proposals voted through. On this subject, the blighted hopes of the promoters of a federal policy for children in the United States provide a good illustration of the paralysis resulting from the inability to arrive at a consensus on the objectives to be attained. Steiner (1977) has given a lively description of these vicissitudes, showing that not only are there deep divisions between different advocates of the children' cause, but just as many regarding the cause itself.

The strength of these divergent interests and different viewpoints is clearly admitted in Yugoslavia, where a complex permanent negotiating mechanism has been developed, intended to allow differing or divergent or contradictory interests of the parties concerned to be reconciled. A similar significance could be attached to the constitution in 1972 of the County of Cheshire Joint Consultative Committee for the pre-school child and family, in which local representatives of all the bodies interested in early childhood came together: the county education and social services committees, play-group associations, private medical, pedagogic or social work associations. It is now in this committee that the development of services for the under-fives is planned.

Numerous indications lead to the conclusion that policy for children is marked by considerable sensitivity about a number of particularly controversial issues which are found in the majority of countries and which divide political groups (essentially those who make the decisions), professionals, users, workers' associations or private philanthropical bodies. It is interesting to note that some of these issues have been the subject of controversy for several decades, while others on the other hand are relatively recent.

A classical conflict arose between a social and educational policy for young children comprising categorical programmes designed for specific groups of the population and a global policy based on a system of services accessible to all. In 1905, already, the minority report of the British Royal Commission on the Poor Law refused to adopt the guiding principle inspiring American legislation, according to which it was necessary to provide services reserved to the poor, using the following argument: "a system of comprehensive services, providing the poor with medical services, education, cash and so forth, simply laid the foundation for a dual delivery system, which separated those who were poor from those who were not, services for the poor were of low quality, and when guided by the principle of 'less eligibility' would stigmatise and degrade those it was designed to aid" (37).

The controversy is still alive today, as shown by recent polemics in the United States, arising mainly out of the Mondale-Bradenas proposal calling for the introduction of a universal system of services for the under-fives, stopped in 1971 by Presidential veto. A few years later, the Consultative Committee on Child Development of the National Academy of Sciences pointed out that categorical programmes did not achieve the results hoped for (38), but Steiner (97) concludes his analyses of federal policy for children in the United States by recommending the implementation of specific programmes focused upon certain well-defined disadvantaged groups.

Other subjects on the other hand, which had been the centre of impassioned debate, have lost much of their virulence and are now almost only of historical interest. One can put in this category for example the discussion over the relationship between mother and child and the need of the child for attachment which was used to slow down the development of crèches. In the majority of the reports as well as in a good many recent publications dealing with policies for children, this topic is hardly mentioned at all except in passing.

It seems useful, to facilitate the continuation of this analysis, to indicate the sensitive areas that are to be found in the majority of Member countries and which constitute in a sense the common core of the different political confrontations. We shall examine five of them here:

- issues of cost;
- quality versus quantity;
- centralisation versus local autonomy;
- professionals versus parents;
- public service versus private arrangements.

2. ISSUES OF COST(*)

To analyse services for young children from an economic point of view, it is necessary to consider two types of factor. The first is the amount of resources used for children under six, this being constituted not only of monetary contributions (public and/or private), but also of facilities, labour, etc. The typical question that arises in this context, therefore, concerns the possibility of employing these resources in some way that would be more beneficial to society than the institutions and projects in question.

The second set of factors concerns the social benefits obtained. Now, one of the characteristics of pre-school projects is the fact that the users are not only children (who, in theory at least, ought to be better served, the more specialised the staff), but also the people who have charge of the children, thanks mainly to the time gained as a result of the existence of day-care services.

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*) See the Annex for a detailed cost-benefit study of day-nurseries and nursery schools, which was prepared by Professor George Psacharopoulos as a background paper for the OECD Intergovernmental Conference on Policies for Children held in Paris in 1980.

Given the present state of knowledge, it is not possible to measure the social benefits obtained through investment in this sector, but the existence of strong political pressures as well as a considerable market in the field of early chilhood care and education allow us to say that there must be benefits. In a market society, services are no longer expanded once their marginal costs exceed the benefits derived; this situation generally causes government intervention in the form of measures to encourage, regulate or control the market. But it must also be pointed out that the authorities are called upon to intervene when a society fixes new objectives for itself, such as increased equality for its members. In any event, it must be emphasized that one of the direct effects of the existence of services is to permit a good many people to use their own time in some other way.

This increase in available time is of particular importance, because one of the possible ways of using this time is to increase the labour supply. Thus the time made available can have a significant economic value and an analysis of the budgetary implications of a policy of expanding ECCE provision must take this into account.

1) Determining expenditures for children

There is not a single report in which national authorities express complete satisfaction with the extent of all their services. Until quite recently, in the majority of countries there were no development objectives determined on the basis of a precise evaluation. In these circumstances, certain observers do not hesitate to affirm that the trend to expand early childhood care and education facilities is now irresistible (39).

If this analysis is correct, the responsible public authorities will be faced with two problems:

- the choice of criteria for determining the proportion of the social budget that should be devoted to young children;
- the way to go about increasing resources permitting growing expenditure to be financed in a period of economic crisis.

In other words, it is a matter of determining how much communities *ought* to spend if social pressure for the generalisation of services is maintained, and how much they *can* spend taking into account budgetary restrictions due to the slowing-down of economic growth. The reply to these two questions will vary according to whether it is considered that:

- There is no relationship between the trend towards a generalisation of provision and economic development. The one is completely independent of the other, and the economic situation, i.e. the needs of the system of production, the organisation of work, trends in GNP and profit levels, do not determine the choices, attitudes and needs of parents as regards the care and education of their children, or the perception that they have of children's needs.

- The resources of the State are not unlimited, because they depend on the economic situation. Therefore, the extension of the welfare system cannot be continued indefinitely without running the risk of exhausting the public coffers. This danger can put a brake on the development of ambitious programmes (as is the case in Sweden) or force the adoption of compromise solutions (as is the case in France, where universal preschooling has been achieved through having very large classes).(40) There is always tension between the choice of quality versus quantity when funds are limited.

It must be recognised that the size of the overall budget is subject to the effects of cyclical trends and that in periods of crisis economic necessity takes precedence over social desirability. However, the State's reduced financial circumstances during periods of economic crisis does not preclude the possibility of modifying the distribution of resources between the different sectors of the budget. Room for manoeuvre still exists, thanks to the fact that the budget has to be discussed and voted by the parliament. If it is admitted that the network of services can only be extended as the result of an increase in the social budget and a decrease in the State's other expenses, it is easy to see that sound arguments are needed before entering into negotiations within the administration or engaging in political debate with the aim of overcoming the opposition and resistance to any change in the status quo.

Then again, if it is accepted that the State does not have capacity for supporting social charges, it necessarily follows that, in the first place, limits must be set and, in the second, the most profitable or efficient way of employing the available resources must be sought.

The validity of these two convictions, which imply contradictory evaluations of the role of economic factors in drawing up social policy will not be further discussed here: in one case it is desired that economic policy be subordinated to social policy and adapted to that end; in the other, the guidelines are imposed by economic considerations that determine the priorities for government action and fix limits to what can be done in the social field.

If it is really desired to adopt a political viewpoint that will allow of an effective policy for children, it is essential to go beyond the level of convictions and critically to check the value of each affirmation empirically in order to avoid errors of judgement brought about by ideological projection. Under these conditions, the arguments become clearer and the premises for a solution on the basis of rational agreement could appear.

It is therefore obvious that the battle for financing the development of services for young children can only be won by using sound rational arguments, where the ideological content is as small as possible. This requirement is all the more valid if the expansion of services is to be continued well beyond present limits, so that the financial resources required will be higher than they have been up to now.

ii) The economic arguments

The quality of the information of an economic nature that should provide a basis for a rational analysis of convictions is not always satisfactory. In almost all countries there are numerous studies on the running costs of certain services, on financial planning mechanisms and administrative procedures for setting up facilities, of the effects of different standards as regards costs (41), but there are gaps to be seen at least in two areas - cost/benefit analysis of early childhood care and education services, and overall expenditure of public and private bodies on services for children, financing procedures and actual practice in using these services (42). We will return to these two points in order to illustrate the nature of the requirements more precisely.

a) Cost/benefit analysis

The main problem here lies in identifying the social effects and measuring them in economic terms. These effects may be short-, medium- or long-term. For example, the existence of a service looking after sick children can have a short term effect because it allows a gainfully employed parent to avoid losing hours of work with the corresponding drop in wages; it allows the employer to avoid an increase in absenteeism causing a decrease in productivity. A nursery school can have a two-fold effect: in the short term, by liberating the parents for part of the day from the task of looking after the children; in the medium term, by allowing the children to follow their compulsory schooling with a greater measure of success, reducing the number of failures and the number of special or adjustment classes required. In the long term, the complex of services for the aid, education and care of young children, in particular abandoned or maltreated children, could help, for example, to reduce the number of juvenile delinquents.

Experts who deal with children often assert, when the cost of ECCE services is brought up, that we must stop thinking of all that is done for children as being simply expenses or losses. Quite the contrary, it is really a question of investment, i.e. the productive use of resources which is of benefit both to the child and to society; or in other terms, those who spend the most now will have to spend the least in the future. Now, if it is desired to make cost/benefit analysis the means of resolving the problem of allocation of resources we must prove its validity with precise data. In other words, it is a question of proving that investments to develop a network of services covering the education, care and health of all young children will bring about a long-term reduction in the social costs, assistance, special education, re-education, instruction. In short, looking from the other point of view, it is necessary to know how much is really saved if we do not invest in early childhood. Data on this subject are scanty and there is a genuine need for information.

An interesting matter is the cost-benefit analysis of day care services (Gustafsson, 1978). In order to demonstrate that crèches are socially profitable, Gustafsson sets out to measure the effect they have on women's work, starting from the fact that the existence of crèches permits mothers to choose gainful employment outside the home. She therefore attempts to compare the total incomes of women over the whole of their working lives, in the case of women who interrupt their careers and in the case of those who do not.

She has thus chosen to build her demonstration on the consequences that the existence of crèches could have for mothers and to use the incomes of working women over the whole of their working lives as an index of social benefit. However, an economist consultant to the ECCE Project expressed a somewhat different opinion in this matter. It reads as follows:

"With regard to future ('investment') child effects, the argument is that no data exists on what will happen to the next generation. We do not know whether a child more than five years of age will lose or gain in earnings, as a result of day-care treatment, when he/she is 20 years old (i.e. 15 years ahead). However, a very similar argument should qualify any statements we make about the effect on a woman's earnings 15 years from now as a result of acquiring more experience today. If we have the data at all, we have only historic lifetime earnings profiles to work with and there is no guarantee that they can be translated forward. Nevertheless it is standard practice to do this, but in the context of evaluating ECCE much more discussion should be given as to why we are willing to do this for one group of people (the mothers) but not for another (the children). After all, among non-economists the future effect of ECCE on child achievement (and subsequent earnings) is what dominates the discussion and evidence in America is becoming available. Economists should not opt out of the discussion on the expedient grounds that they have some data for one group but not for the other. The consequence of a number of alternative assumptions on child achievement and future earnings could be handled in the same way as mothers are treated." (43)

This comment clearly shows the nature of methodological difficulties that have to be resolved. In fact, the same pointed out several others: the choice of the alternatives to be examined, the value, in terms of benefits, of the quality of services, the economic value of housework, the value attributed to different ways of spending time and the inclusion of the costs of transport and training in calculating the cost of developing services.

Nevertheless, Gustafsson's demonstration, based on data relating to Sweden, is very interesting. From the social point of view, we are reminded that the absence of crèches forces a certain number of mothers to interrupt their gainful employment for a certain number of years. It is shown that this interruption has long-term effects through causing a loss of income: a complete loss, if the mother does not take up gainful employment again, a less serious, but still substantial, loss, proportional to the duration of the interruption, if she goes back to work at a later stage. In any case, she will never reach the income level she would have had if she had not stopped working.

The gainful employment of mothers thus modifies not only income distribution policy, but also the scope for pursuing welfare policies thanks to the additional revenue available to the State through taxing these higher incomes. The author concludes: "The excess of lifetime earnings in the alternative with day-care over lifetime earnings in the alternative without day-care are the benefits of day-care". It could further be said that it is probably a point of view of this sort that was partly responsible for the development of crèches. The existence of institutions to care for children allowed an increase in the labour force available for productive work. Thus it was already known, though not in strictly economic terms, that crèches were profitable from this point of view, since the work mothers do in the home is considered to be non-productive.

Gustafsson, by developing this line of reasoning, shows that if the gainful employment of mothers were systematically fostered, the social benefits would be so great that the expenditure accorded to the construction and running of crèches would soon be recovered. Nevertheless, this demonstration is not entirely convincing because the assumptions on which she bases her argument (the generalisation and acceptance of lifelong gainful employment by mothers) is open to question, especially by part of the women's movement which refuses to define "productive" work in business or industry as the alternative to "non-productive" work in the home (44). Other important subjective benefits are also difficult to express numerically (for example, the state of mind of parents who know that their children are looked after during the day by high quality services, the improvement in children's state of health, the effects of proper nourishment, etc.) or have not been taken into account (effects on children). It should, however, be borne in mind that this path, the advisability of which remains to be demonstrated, could turn out to be a very attractive way of approaching political discussions armed with new and efficacious arguments.

b) Overall expenditure of public and private organisations

When one tries to determine the actual total expenditure incurred for services for children, one is faced by almost insurmountable difficulties. In fact, the financing channels are so numerous and so interwoven that it is impossible to calculate exactly how much is invested in the children's sector.

The State is the source of the principal flow of funds: subsidies granted for investments, for family and other allowances, for the costs of running services and training staff. On the face of it, working out how much is spent should not present any great problem, but in practice the obstacles met with are far from negligible. Even without counting special programmes (nourishment, improvement of the dwellings of large families, disablement insurance, etc.), there is obviously already considerable dispersion at the origin of the funds, which generally come from several ministries. Moreover, each ministry finances its own programme of activities. For example, the Ministry of Health has pediatric development schemes which include programmes of assistance to mothers during pregnancy and childbirth, health checks during the child's early years, prophylactic and preventive programmes, as well as programmes for children with special needs or at high risk. These may include such varied activities as rehabilitation, support for families, integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools, financing of prostheses, and so on. In short, drawing up the children's budget (i.e. the whole of public expenditure on children) at State level is a very difficult task. Attempts are made to achieve this by using different classification criteria (distinguishing between measures with a direct financial impact and those with an indirect one), but even doing this, the difficulties still remain, they are merely displaced. Leaving aside the statistical problems met with in trying to reconstitute the budget as seen from above (OECD, 1976) there is another problem much more serious than the technical one. This is the fact that in the early childhood sector, finance coming from the central administration is only part of the story. The rest concerns the communities or intermediate levels (states, departments, cantons, provinces, regions, etc.).

The analysis of expenditures and investments at the community level is the only one that can give an idea of the real situation, but reconstituting the picture becomes far more complicated because the large flows of finance coming from the ministries disappear here into an extremely dense network of small channels which is impossible to navigate. This situation arises from the fact that early childhood is still relatively autonomous vis-à-vis the central authority. Even in countries with a strongly centralised administrative tradition, local communities keep or win back, as is the case in Italy, a certain independence in the running of pre-school services (45).

In France, two-thirds of the cost of setting up a nursery school class are the community's responsibility, as well as 60 per cent of the annual operating costs (46). On the other hand, the national administration pays the teachers' salaries.

In Sweden, 55.1 per cent of the costs of pre-school centres are taken over by the State, 33.6 per cent by communities and 11.3 per cent by the parents (Gustafson, 1978). In the province of Alberta, Canada, 20 per cent of public expenditure on pre-schooling is looked after by the municipalities, 30 per cent is subsidised by the provincial government and the remaining 50 per cent by the federal government, by way of the "Canadian Assistance Plan". In the United States, "the federal government funds many programmes on a 50-50 basis with the States and localities. In selected programme areas, Congress has stipulated a 90-10 or 75-25 funding ratio between federal and local governments. This means that for every local dollar allotted, the State receives nine federal dollars, or three federal dollars, depending on the formula" (47). In Switzerland, the federal government does not subsidise pre-schooling except in the case of services for handicapped children, and the costs of day-care facilities and nursery schools are met entirely by the cantons and communes.

In the majority of countries, local authorities have an important place as regards their share of the costs of developing and running ECCE services; consequently, if it is desired to have a true picture of public expenditure on children, their contribution must be calculated also. But this calculation is not so simple, either, because the sum made available by the municipalities does not correspond to abstract levels, uniformly applied by all communities. Determination of the amounts is strongly influenced in the first place by the financial capacity of the community and then by the conditions attached to the granting of federal or state subsidies. It is therefore extremely important to know the procedures employed to obtain subsidies and to evaluate the use made of them. It is known, for example, that in certain cases communities do not take advantage of the subsidies available because they are unable to respect the conditions attached to them. Communities or states take action, finance implementation, but do not use the resources available, the sharing out of which does not follow automatically. This situation is well-known in the United States, for example, where: "the current federal day-care requirements (particularly child-staff ratios) - however 'appropriate' they may be from the federal government's point of view - are perceived by some states as onerous. In some cases, states are 'buying out' of the federal regulations by setting up their own child-care programmes with less stringent requirements and using Title XX funds for other social services currently being provided by state monies. In other cases, states are forcing ADEC recipients to utilise the work-expense allowance to purchase care on their own, rather than providing these women with services directly through Title XX in order to avoid enforcement of standards" (48). The results of this state of affairs is clear; "children are deprived due to the state's failure to participate in a federal-state programme or because the state meets only a portion of need" (49).

It must not be forgotten either that looking at the situation from the point of arrival, i.e. where the consumers are, the picture is most often extremely varied: there are facilities like crèches and nursery schools which depend to a large extent on local authorities; others which, by contrast, escape their control and are directly attached to district or state authorities, such as certain medical services, for example; assistance which is given directly to the beneficiaries, like subsidies for large families or for housing, does not pass via the local administration; facilities and financial aid reserved for particular defined categories, either in consultation with the local administration or on the basis of programmes launched at a higher level. In Italy, there is the example of a single service (nursery schools) depending on three different institutions: there are state public nurseries run by the Ministry of Education; public nursery schools run by the municipalities; private nursery schools, which in fact are mainly run by religious institutions. It is obviously rather complicated to check all this influx, even though it is extremely useful to be able to determine just what proportion of public resources actually reaches those for whom they are intended, the children, and what proportion gets lost along the way.

Then again, families also enter into the calculation, because the use of several services is not always free, and parents' financial contributions are fixed according to sliding scales based on income. In France, for example, the fees paid by families cover 33 per cent of the running costs of crèches. Furthermore, if accuracy is desired, it is also necessary to count other expenses (which families often incur in using public services for their children) and that one might call invisible because they are not laid down anywhere anywhere and can vary enormously. In other words, it is necessary to know whether the distribution of resources through all these channels of different sizes does not cause bottlenecks, but especially whether the result is appropriate to the needs or whether there are not children and families who end up by being privileged by the distribution system and others who, on the other hand, suffer as a result of uneven distribution.

In order to answer these questions satisfactorily, it is impossible to avoid examining the private sector contribution. It is well known that, especially in the field of early childhood the private sector still plays an important role today. In Italy, for example, in 1976 only 19.7 per cent of children from three to five were enrolled in public nursery schools, while 46.5 per cent attended private schools. In the United Kingdom (Tizard, 1976) in 1973 the ECCE arrangements for roughly a quarter (23.6 per cent) of the under-fours was known: 9.7 per cent were enrolled in private services. If the children looked after by registered child-minders (2.5 per cent) are added to this group, it can be said that over half of the children whose situation was known (i.e. 12.2 per cent out of 23.6 per cent) used private services or facilities. In France, out of 2,400,000 children under three, in 1977, about 260,000 (10.8 per cent) attended public institutions (crèches or nursery schools) and 800,000 (33.3 per cent) were looked after by child-minders (50). In Canada, in Calgary (Alberta) in 1977, "90 per cent of the children of working mothers tended to be placed in informal arrangements with friends, neighbours, relatives or ad hoc arrangements". In the same province, in 1976, there were 809 privately-run crèches (in the official tables, these centres are classified under the heading of commercial centres) and 1,146 publicly-run crèches. In Germany in 1975, public crèches accounted for 63 per cent of the supply, private crèches 30 per cent and the rest, 7 per cent, were run by trade associations. It would be inappropriate to explain and interpret this situation here. It suffices to point out that everywhere the private sector carries considerable weight and thus if an accurate idea of the means employed to look after children in our societies is desired, it is essential to take account of it.

In general, it can be said that community expenditure on children is substantial, but it is not known what proportion of the sums allocated actually benefits the children and how much, on the contrary, goes to finance the administrative apparatus. This situation is summed up very clearly in a study on pre-school services in Massachusetts (Sheehan, 1977):

"For all practical purposes, neither monitoring nor evaluation exists for State agencies serving children. There is no system and there is no control. We spend US$ 80 million every year to purchase services for children without any demand for accountability. The level of monitoring and evaluation of purchased services is no less than malfeasance on the part of several State agencies: no one knows what they are buying. No one knows whether the services were ever provided. No one knows what the quality of the services were. (A state official)".

Thus those who desire that more resources should be made available for children, or simply that the funds presently available should be better used, demand better knowledge of the economic management of the ECCE system. This request is based on the hope that through applying rational principles it will be possible to see more clearly in this sector if not to put it in order, which will improve the distribution of resources. Nevertheless, it is by no means certain that a more rational and accountable management is first of all possible and secondly would permit a better redistribution of resources or an increase in them.

3. ISSUE: QUALITY VERSUS QUANTITY

All Member countries are currently paying great attention to the problems posed by the definition of standards of service to be imposed on institutions. These efforts are in response to two major concerns: the first is to promote the well-being of children in order to prevent the exploitation of children, staff or parents; the second is to develop the social services and avoid private enterprise competition. Now, in countries where there is a strong resistance to public initiative in the pre-school sector, as for example in the United States, Canada and some Scandinavian countries, the authorities make every effort to establish and impose standards, i.e. operating conditions, that ensure high quality services.

These quality standards involve a vast range of factors: the number and size of the rooms, their arrangement, furniture and teaching materials, number of children per unit, number of care and teaching staff, of auxiliaries, staff qualifications, internal regulations fixing the relations between and responsibilities of the staff, activity programmes, etc.

In the National Day-Care Study carried out for the Day-Care Services Division of the United States Federal Agency for Children, Young People and Families, by Abt Associates Inc., between 1974 and 1978, the Federal requirements laid down in 1968 for the establishment of crèches were split into three categories (NDCS, 1979):

- The standard core covers the day-to-day delivery of essential services to the child in day care. It is this component of day care which is found in all day-care centres across the country. It consists of the centre facility, the care givers, meals, first aid, and the administrative structure that supports direct delivery of care. The standard core programme always includes basic care of the child (protecting, "nurturing", "feeding", etc.) and usually involves some minimum "educational" activity during part of the day as well.
- The varying core includes some additional health and transportation services. These services may be provided (if they are provided at all) by the centre or some other agency depending on local circumstances.
- The Supplemental Services Program comprises elements generally considered to benefit the child indirectly; they include such areas as family social services and staff training.

1) The relationship between quality and cost

The level of requirements has a direct impact on the cost of services and thus assumes considerable political importance. The higher the standards, the higher the running costs and the greater the difficultie in the way of expanding the provision. The two options are virtually completely exclusive: either spend a lot to have a limited number of excellent facilities accessible only to a minority, or spend the same amount to produce a considerable number of less sophiscated facilities, but accessible to a greater number. Each of these solutions has its partisans, who may for convenience be divided into two groups, the "purists" and the "pragmatists".

The purists have only two choices open to them: either accept that the services be reserved for a minority of children, or refuse this restriction. In the first case, their situation is very embarassing, because they have to establish criteria for deciding who shall benefit. It is admitted that these should be the most deprived children. The disadvantaged, both physically and socially, and the poor are once more in danger of being isolated. The facilities which accept them, through the very fact of being reserved for a particular category of child, will finish up by being regarded as services for the poor and their efficacy will be to this extent limited, despite their quality. Services for the poor will no longer be poor services, but that is all. For the poor, their function will always remain the same, so that distrust of them will persist. In the second case, all children would have a right to quality services, but then the rate of expansion of public facilities would be slowed down, given the budgetary restrictions to which social service expenditure is generally subject, unless a change of policy were demanded that resulted in a substantial growth in the resources available for children over the next few years.

The pragmatists, for their part, through making concessions on quality requirements, run the risk of being accused of endangering children's development or forcing public authorities into useless expenditure, once certain parents, realising that the quality of the centres caring for children is not satisfactory, refuse to send their children to them, preferring instead to keep them at home or find some private arrangement or use the services offered by the commercial sector. Nevertheless, the pragmatists point out that the majority of families prefer to use public services when these exist, and that even if the services are not very good, they are used nevertheless.

The search for a compromise between the quality and cost of facilities and the supply of a sufficient number of places to satisfy demand pressure is essential. The problem is to reconcile the principle of universal provision which allows all who wish to use the services to do so, with that of quality of provision making the public services offered attractive to all potential users.

The position is fairly well exemplified by French policy with regard to nursery schools. Having chosen to make a universal non-discriminatory provision, an impressive effort has been made since the sixties to extend pre-schooling. From 1967-68 to 1976-77, the rate of pre-schooling - public and private - of 2-year-old children rose from 13.5 per cent to 26.1 per cent, that of 3-year-olds from 50.9 per cent to 81.6 per cent. The Ministry estimates that the rate of 2-year-old children will reach 32.2 per cent in 1980. This impressive advance was obtained by accepting the counterpart risk of less than ideal conditions (very large classes, high staff/child ratio).

Many States in the United States seem to be heading in this direction. In fact, the requirements that they apply are often inferior to those set by federal authorities which are considered to be too expensive and thus not favourable to a policy of expansion of centres for children. It is not easy to explain why States introduce other norms, thus losing the right to federal subsidy, but one of the possible explanations is that too stringent federal norms fetter local initiative and that the monetary advantage flowing from their application does not make up for the difficulties inherent in their adoption or the political problem that they represent for the local authorities (51). Finally, the United States Congress seems to have been motivated by the same preoccupations when, in 1978, it suspended the application of federal norms and requested the administration to justify the value of the criteria imposed (Rich, 1978), in the knowledge that the application of these norms would not only cost a great deal more, but would also necessitate an expansion of the bureaucracy, because norms cannot be imposed without control.

ii) Ambiguity of standards: example of the staff/child ratio

The standards relating to class size, number of staff and their training, are given particular importance because they are perhaps the only ones that can be administratively controlled fairly precisely. Nevertheless, their definition is very difficult and the assessment of their efficacy is sometimes debatable. The case of the staff/child ratio is significant in this respect, given the practical and symbolic importance attributed to it.

Scientific research has proved that the quantity and quality of interactions of all kinds between adults and children and between the children themselves are the determining factors in children's intellectual development, verbal enrichment, sense of independence, self-confidence and initiative. Consequently, the definition of standards allowing the creation within institutions of conditions favourable to the growth of these interrelationships is a very controversial topic. The United States National Day-Care Study (NDCS, 1979) contains a very detailed analysis of this issue and clearly demonstrates the ambiguity of all rigid standards, as well as the difficulty of identifying in the teacher-child relationship significant aspects and determinant variables in behavioural development. The standards laid down by some countries are shown in the following tabulation:

United States:	The Federal Interagency Day-Care Requirements (FIDCR) for centres:		
	Age of children	Maximum number of children per staff number	Maximum group size
	Under 6 weeks	1	not specified
	6 weeks to 3 years	4	not specified
	3 to 4 years	5	15
	4 to 6 years	7	20
	6 to 9 years	15	25
	10 to 14 years	20	25
Italy:	Under 3 years	5/7 (in the municipal crèches)	not specified
Sweden:	Ordinary day-nurseries:		
	1/2-2	3	10
	2-3	2.5	8
	3-4	2.5	12
	5-7	3	15
	National Board of Health and Welfare requirements:		
	1/2-2	4-4.5	10-12
	3-7	2-4	10-20
Denmark:	Under 3 years:	3.6	10
Belgium:	Norms of the National Children's Charity:		
	Newborn to 8 months	5	not specified
	8 months to 18 months	8	not specified
	18 months to 36 months	10	not specified
Netherlands: (regulation in 1977)	0-1 year	4	8
	1-2	5	10
	2-3	6	12
	3-4	8	16
	4 and over	9	18

These figures reveal that the regulations in force in different countries are fairly similar, which explains the similar concern of several authorities.

The American study on day-care centres already mentioned is actually the most complete analysis of this topic. It was implemented in order to reply to the following three political questions:

1st question concerning the quality of day-care:

How is the development of pre-school children in federally-subsidised day-care centres affected by variations in staff/child ratio, staff professionalism, group size and/or other regulatable centre characteristics?

2nd question concerning the cost of day-care:

How is the per-child cost of centre day-care affected by variations in staff/child ratio, staff professionalism, group size and/or other regulatable centre characteristics?

3rd question concerning the potential quality/cost trade-offs:

How does the cost-effectiveness of federally-subsidised centre-based day care change when adjustments are made in staff/child ratio, staff professionalism, group size and/or other regulatable centre characteristics?

The results of the research concerning 3.600 crèches and kindergartens demonstrated that the size of the group of children is of much more significance in the children's development than the staff ratio. "Groups of 12-14 children with two caregivers had, on the average, better outcomes than groups of 24-28 children with four care-givers." (NDCS, 1979).

Nevertheless, this discussion, and even more so its results, are not fully convincing. Indeed, no one is sure that the rigid application of cost standards of the child/staff ratio in institutions will really guarantee an improvement in the quality of education. What is involved is not the adult/child ratio but the quality of the relationships between children and their educators. One can assume that a high ratio would be more favourable to education than a small one, but a change in ratio will never automatically lead to an improvement in education.

Even in a service composed of many qualified staff members, a deterioration in working conditions could result which would do nothing to facilitate the relationships with the children. On the contrary, there have been many educators who came to "perform miracles" in large classes.

In conclusion, the controversy quality versus quantity is not really so difficult if the aims to be achieved are not forgotten.

4. ISSUE: CENTRALISATION VERSUS LOCAL AUTONOMY

1) The centralised model

When speaking of centrally organised public services, it is fairly easy to agree on what is meant by this model of organisation, for everybody has some idea of what it is. Broadly speaking, a centralised system is one where decisions concerning principles of application, aims, regulations and standards for financing are taken at a high administrative level, imposed upon the base and controlled by a body of administrators. The fact that there may not be one single peak to the pyramid, but several, each having the power of decision over a particular area is considered to be of secondary importance. The essential fact is that decisions are taken without the direct participation of the base. Usually, they are adopted at a sufficiently high administrative level to ensure the greatest possible degree of homogeneity in their application. The centralised model is an authoritarian one that imposes decisions taken outside the circle of those who actually operate and use the services. This is the fairly widespread stereotype of centralised organisation.

Under various forms this model enjoyed considerable success until quite recently; even in countries with a federalist tradition the action of municipalities was for the most part regulated and directed by the policy of the state, province, canton or land. Several factors combine to explain the success of this formula and all imply different political trends of the role of the State in industrial society. But it could also be said that its popularity rests to a certain extent on the fact that several political circles consider centralisation to be advantageous and economic, that is, more efficient.

Some of these advantages have been instrumental in establishing an alliance between philanthropists concerned about combating poverty and helping the poor, radicals aiming at social justice, equality and other ideals stemming from the revolutionary epic, and centralists wanting to reinforce the power of the State. This comes about when centralised state administration is seen, amongst other things, as an instrument for effecting social change. With its civil servants, teachers, judges, the state organisation's mission is to transform society, propagating the same codes of social conduct and imposing a common language, even in the most remote areas. The introduction of compulsory lay education in France is one of the most eloquent applications of this missionary conception of the role of the State.

The centralised apparatus is supposed to favour the correction of unequal development between different areas and indirectly between social classes. Unfortunately, it has been found that in actual practice these ambitious objectives have been only very partially achieved, since disequilibria continue to exist within States. The data in table 11 relating to France give an idea of social disparities in the field of pre-school education that still exist in a country having a long and strong centralised tradition in this sector. There seems no doubt that the centralised administrative model satisfies management requirements that are based on the rational principles: uniformity, rapidity, simplicity.

The reduction of differences through imposing a unique set of services and benefits applicable everywhere ought to simplify the running of an administration operating according to the same principles. The uniformity of the regulations ought to facilitate modifications to them and consequently it should be possible to effect changes rapidly. Finally, this uniformity is also a pre-condition for more effective control of the operation of services and thus for the broadest guarantee against abuses and corruption.

Table 11

FRANCE: DIFFERENCES IN PRE-SCHOOLING BETWEEN THE SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

Socio-occupational category S.O.C.	Children with no pre-schooling as a percentage of the S.O.C.	Average length of pre-schooling in years
Farmers and farm workers	31.3	1.1
Workers	18.4	1.8
Service personnel	18.5	1.8
Industrial and commercial management	14.8	1.9
Shop and office workers	13.1	2
Executives	11.7	2
Professions and senior executives	9.3	2.1

Source: *L'école maternelle et l'égalité des chances*, étude d'un séminaire de l'ENA, Études et documents, 77.2.

Although rarely evaluated, this centralising model has long functioned as a catalyst for different forces that have brought about important social and educational reforms. Thus a centralised organisation has sometimes seemed progressive, indispensable for shaking the rigidity of accepted solutions while local administrations appear less innovatory.

This dichotomy, well-known in the history of federalist countries, constituted the background of the most ambitious comprehensive social reform programmes of the sixties, President Johnson's "Great Society" project in the United States. Within a few years the United States Federal administration launched a series of programmes that also partly concerned early childhood: the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offence Control Act (1966), the Community Mental Health Center Act (1963), the Economic Opportunity Act (1964), and various social projects (Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Community Action Program), Head Start, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), creation of the Office of Child Development (1969). Now, all these initiatives have in common a similar conception of the role of the State as mentioned above. It has also been pointed out that:

> "1. It is the federal initiatives that aim at short-circuiting the power of local authorities. Not only does the Washington government provide part of the funds, it also makes an effort to set up new institutions to distribute them, or at least to control their use ...;
> 2. In this process, the accent is on community participation, the new initiatives being community oriented ...;
> 3. Conversely, these choices betray great suspicion towards those responsible for traditional assistance institutions and municipal services ...;
> 4. Federal strategy is concerted, but pluralist." (Castel, 1978).

ii) Limitations of centralisation

Discovery of the shortcomings of centralised management, the swelling of the administrative apparatus, ever more cumbersome and onerous, the exposure of scandals - on a local scale, but easily generalised because of the uniform type of organisation - the destabilizing role at the expense of local administrations, have given rise to growing disenchantment with the supposed advantages of this model, and in some cases a lively opposition.

It is known today that a centralised organisation does not necessarily simplify practices and procedures, does not automatically facilitate reforms nor permit their rapid introduction; finally, control becomes more complicated, thus offering no better guarantee against abuses and scandals.

Examples abound, but we shall limit ourselves to recalling the difficulties encountered by large administrations in trying to use up all the credits voted for specific programmes. This is the case in the United States (where part of the additional $200 million made available in the 1977 and 1978 financial years within the framework of Title XX with a view to encouraging the adoption of Federal Interagency Day-Care Requirements was not able to be used) (48); in France, for procurement credits provided for in priority action programmes to foster the extension of public crèches; in Italy, where funds allocated under Law 1044 on a quinquennial basis for the development of community crèches were not able to be fully utilised. These examples show that, despite their power, central administrations meet and perhaps will go on meeting obstacles in applying their guidelines.

As a result of these findings concerning the flexibility and efficacy of the system, but certainly also in the light of other considerations of a political nature in the last few years, criticisms of the functioning of the state system and the administration of social policy are again very much to the fore. Many people are now calling for greater autonomy for local authorities, both in the social sector and in that of child care and education.

iii) The decentralised model

There is a twofold reason for the success of this trend: one of a technical nature, the other social. From a technical point of view, claiming greater autonomy for local authorities meets the need for less cumbersome and more efficient management with no need of a great number of administrative levels that absorb considerable resources, are the source of many conflicts and make the institutions ponderous. Decentralisation is thus a strategy of organisational reform with a view to achieving greater efficiency in the use of resources,of funds and of specialists across a whole series of health, education, assistance, consultative and preventive services, with often no intercommunication and which, furthermore, waste a good many specialists in administrative tasks. Through setting up local plurivalent centres, decentralisation should in theory permit of a better utilisation of practitioners as well as increased efficiency of service, through facilitating the distribution and utilisation of services. Instead of being introduced according to a plan coming from above, with the danger of splitting into autonomous units complementary services which ought to be brought together, provision can be arranged by the local authority according to the needs of the population. Provision gets closer to the consumer and services can be grouped so as best to meet the need for co-ordination (Rein, 1970)

From the social point of view, the necessity for decentralisation follows from the application of the principle that the most appropriate solutions for children and families should be those arrived at on the spot by the interested parties themselves, those people being in a better position to determine the nature of the services they need. Of course, those interested cannot simply be reduced to parents and adults with dependent children. In a broader sense, the community for which the children represent continuity and the future is an interested party in this process. The development of local autonomy is thus a condition that allows the reinforcement of the social dynamic within a community, offers individuals the opportunity to identify with a group sharing common values and children the chance to have socialisation models, to establish relationships with neighbours, to feel attachment to a milieu through experiencing strong and lasting social bonds. The isolation in which an increasing number of families live, which fosters a retreat into family life seen as a protected environment in which one is not yet completely dispossessed, the individualistic nature of contemporary life that favours a spirit of competition and division, the privatisation of a good many experiences that used to be shared with the social environment, the separation of the generations who are confined to places reserved for them during long periods of the day, all this has brought about a feeling of malaise and a whole series of social problems, the remedy to which has been and is being sought not only in a very expensive proliferation of social assistance and mutual aid services, but also through the promotion of local initiatives.

iv) Difficulties in defining local autonomy

For obvious reasons, it is not so easy as in the case of the centralised model to define the local autonomy. The terminology used to cover this form of organisation is in itself significant. In fact, many expressions are used, such as social management, self-management, community control, local participation, communal democracy, grass roots initiative, community practice, self-managing communities of interest, which designate so many attempts introduced to allow citizens to plan and run projects together, refusing to delegate their powers or their responsibilities. Nevertheless, through the ambiguity of these designations it can be seen once more how different and partly competing views are superimposed, because it can equally well be a strategy of co-ordination or of user participation or of joint management within facilities of all directly interested agents.

To avoid confusion, we shall start by pointing out that local autonomy is not simply an administrative fact concerning public bodies or municipalities and their degree of independence with respect to the central authority; autonomy is more a social condition, a free space left for the initiative of district or local committees and to volunteers. Thus decentralisation should not be equated with local autonomy, because it is quite possible to have a strongly decentralised system (e.g. the Swiss system), without for all that having a great deal of autonomy. Consequently, acceptance of autonomy implies a real willingness to accept a whole range of different practices and conceptions, in other words greater programme heterogeneity.

The vitality of social experimentation in several countries is significant of the needs of the population and the innovative potentiality of communities, as can be seen in Germany, where the "Kinderläden" movement started to flourish about ten years ago, in the United Kingdom, where the "play groups" phenomenon began, in Italy with the "gestione sociale" experiments, in Yugoslavia with the self-managing communities of interest, and in the United States with the various Head Start projects, as well as in the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium and France, where there is a wide range of very varied achievements. It is fairly easy to list a considerable number of initiatives in Member countries, proceeding both inside and outside the official systems, in agreement or opposition with them, seeking operational approaches that avoid the delegation of responsibility and experimenting with formulae that do not organise the users, but allow the users to take the initiative and to organise themselves.

This is a complete reversal of fundamental attitudes, as is well summed up in a paper by the Bologna (Italy) authorities on the subject of crèches: "the crèche is no longer just a social response to needs, it is also becoming an active centre of confrontation with their causes, which means at the same time confronting the contradictions inherent in the social movement and by the same token, controlling this movement so that it does not get out of range of most people like a force set in motion by a privileged few". (53)

v) The redistribution of power

The opposition view examined here is that there should be a different distribution of power, for local autonomy cannot be reconciled with a centralised administration without there being some loss of power on the one side and a gain on the other, in other words, without a new equilibrium being reached in the allocation of responsibilities. For these reasons, management models based on user participation or self-management should not be idealised, because they do not constitute a panacea that automatically modifies actual relations existing in everyday life of the institutions between users and professionals and between professionals and the whole of the social system.

The daily observation of the difficulty still encountered everywhere in obtaining the effective engagement of families, professionals and adults interested in children in running the services clearly shows the need to focus attention on possible mystifications in the postulates of participation and self-management. Practice often falls very far short of the ideal. Three phenomena fairly regularly to be observed are the number of conflicts that flare up within experiments; a drop in consumer participation, and a loss of initial enthusiasm.

These reactions cannot be explained superficially, for example by limiting the search for the cause of setbacks and conflicts to faulty preparation, shortcomings on the level of competence, or management errors (for example, too many or over-long sessions, woolly discussion, professional jargon, or feeling of uselessness on the part of lay members). Instead it must be admitted that giving practical expression to the principle of autonomy is an extremely complex process that cannot be reduced to a technical conjuring trick or to regulating a conflict between different power groups. What is at stake is the identification of subjective interests with non-marketable services, sharing common values with others, the feeling of belonging to a community. From this point of view, it will be agreed that the application of decentralisation measures is not in itself enough to shore up a vacillating social dynamic. So the opposition between autonomists and centralists is not as acute as may appear at first sight. Neither side has the panacea that can protect or promote social solidarity, still less the remedy for a deep-seated social crisis. Over and above the solutions propounded, what has to be considered is the weight of existing political structures and cultural traditions which together constitute an important variable and which explain many particular concrete situations and popular complaints.

5. ISSUE: PROFESSIONALS VERSUS PARENTS

It would be unrealistic to imagine that harmonious co-operation exists between professionals and users and that the conflicts between them are merely the result of misunderstandings that can be settled amicably or sort themselves out automatically. On the contrary, the latent or apparent tensions between professionals and users are the expression of divergent interests and convictions that cannot be easily understood for they relate to both policy and practice. Policy, in so far as what is at stake, is a question of principle concerning the responsibility for education. Practice, when what is involved is everyday behaviour.

In order to determine the principal features of this issue, we shall examine in turn, but necessarily in summary fashion, the theoretical aspect, then the empirical, stressing the historical evolution of professional practice. The origin of the problems that may bring professionals into opposition with users must be sought in the dissemination of institutional practices in the ECCE field.

The advocates of the institutional model (and they can be traced back a long way, at least as far as Plato) have always held that children should be educated outside the family, because the family, basically, in unsuited to this task. This argument makes its appearance as soon as it is recognised that education is a subject in its own right, of considerable value and great complexity that consequently necessitates recourse to specialists. Education becomes a task to be carried out by professionals and specialist institutions with which the programmes, objectives, rates of progress and even the cost of services must be discussed.

Numerous attempts to put into practice the dream of a faultless education offering the best guarantees for the child's integral development, away from the hazards and weaknesses of family relationships, have succeeded one another throughout the course of history, producing a body of professionals entrusted with the task of looking after the infant population. The institutional model finally imposed itself with the appearance of the modern State which offers a whole galaxy of specialist institutions dealing with children, with the compulsory school in pride of place.

The corollary of this situation is not only inflation of the bureaucratic apparatus charged with the management and control of these institutions, but also an extraordinary growth in the number of specialists in the field of childhood. Families and children are surronded by specialists, the world of children is marked by their presence at every point, with important consequences for the behaviour of children and that of parents (who are known, depending on the context, as users, clients or consumers), professionals, administrators and politicians. If the use of a historically justifiable commercial metaphor to define the position and attitude of parents may appear irreverent in some respects, in other ways it is appropriate enough: as customers pay prices for goods that should be an indication of quality, so several services can only be obtained if they are paid for; similarly, just as in the commercial sector, institutions advertise to attract custom or go to seek clients. It cannot be concluded from this that the system of benevolent services is one big market (though in certain countries the place occupied by the commercial sector in this domain is far from negligible); but it can certainly be said that the interests at stake today are considerable.

What is missing is rather "market research" and precise information on the cost efficacy and profits of the operations launched.

Another weak point is the knowledge of the motivations that push the clientele into "buying" or demanding such or such a service. The analysis of parents' associations programmes and their action, of leagues for the rights and defence of children, associations of the friends of childhood and the like could give useful hints on this subject. But these groups, which bear a certain resemblance to consumer movements, are only a partial reflection of reality, only offering a picture of militant groups implanted mainly in certain limited circles of society. Among the working class, for example, reactions show themselves in some other way, only rarely giving rise to active intervention through working-class organisations (even though the unions have from time to time played a considerable role in the development of the policy for children) and are expressed mainly in a variety of forms of passive resistance. These can often be very disconcerting for the professionals, if one is to judge by the reports and experiences of social workers and educators.

Despite the popularity of the institutional model, its acceptance is by no means unanimous. Two different indicators of resistance to the extension of institutionalisation are the problems of marginal families and the development of parent education.

1) The case of marginal families

The existence of these families (which constitute an important part of the sub-proletariat), as well as that of other very marginal family groups (the families of the "Fourth World"), or of rejected or deviant groups, is both a challenge to the specialists of the welfare services and proof of the failure of a certain conception of social policy.

Despite the greater competence of specialists and their spread in some districts of the great cities and in industrial region.

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marginal families do not emerge from their situation because the existing social services and education system are not able to prevent their reproduction. As is shown by the personal history of a good many abandoned children, once they become adult they have little chance of improving their lot; if they succeed in forming a family and having children, in many cases their own story may be repeated, like a tragic destiny: their children may be taken into public institutions and thus the cycle is completed, the vicious circle closed and the story starts all over again. There is thus a sort of deep-seated impossibility blocking any ultimate emergence from the vicious circle of poverty.

Social and educational services alone, therefore, cannot succeed in winning the war against the effects of poverty, destitution, abandon. Indeed, in some respects, their action becomes counter-productive. The greater and more widespread their engagement becomes, the more rejection behaviour is exhibited by the poor, and the more a stubborn obstinacy is observed among the professionals to follow the logic of segregation, the sterility of which is now well known.

In short, then, social and educational intervention, centred on the institutional model, encounters difficulties and is often powerless to solve the problems of marginal families. Solutions corresponding to other conceptions of social work must therefore be envisaged.

ii) The case of parent education

Within the context of the progress of institutionalisation programmes, parent education has a special place. It is necessary to ask what is the significance of the success met in nearly all countries (54) by projects aiming at educating the parents. Their popularity is such that it has been confidently claimed that parent education will be the reformers' main argument during the next two decades (Schlossmann, 1976, Lüscher, 1977). The hopes raised by these projects are in fact well-founded. Studies carried out within the context of compensatory education experiments have shown that, other things being equal, results are better in the experimental groups providing at the same time an activity programme with the parents (Grotberg, 1979).

Parent education is mainly aimed at increasing the educational capacities of the parents and above all of the mothers (Lambie,1974); for it is presumed that parents, and especially certain parents, do not spontaneously take on a teaching function and consequently have to be taught to do so. This view fosters the identical confusion between capability and cultural difference that arose in compensatory education.

Examining this conviction closely, it is seen that:

- the parents in question almost all belong to the same social class (the proletariat or sub-proletariat);
- the desired educative function is defined by the practioners and aims at obtaining the best adaptation to the school milieu;

- spontaneous educative behaviour of the middle classes would be good, that of the working class wrong.

What is more, the impression is sometimes given that the denunciation of an incapacity for teaching amongst working-class and poor parents leads to a more important extrapolation: not only are they not good educators, but they are also suspected of not being good parents. Therefore, parents also have to be taught how to be parents (Tizard, 1979).

This insistence on parent education should be seen as expressing the intentions of the professionals and the administrators, who aim at transforming the parental role into a profession. This process has deep roots and its origins would have to be placed at least as early as the beginning of this century, when the necessity arose to teach working-class women the job of housewife. It was the first stage in a rapid advance: at first, it was a question of learning to run the household economically and hygienically, making housework more efficient and the home more attractive in order to make the working-class milieu healthier. It is at this moment that courses on infant welfare and domestic economy were developed to educate girls for the tasks that were expected of them. Parent education is but the following stage that improves upon the previous approach: good household management not being enough to prevent children's failure at school, it is necessary to complete the housewife's education and turn her into an educator (Donzelot. 1977).

Now, teaching the job of being a parent implies a whole range of pedagogical and psychological knowledge that is indispensible for stimulating the children helping them in their school work, organising their games in an educative manner, provoking their questions and replying in an appropriate way, choosing suitable toys, understanding family conflicts and managing them to create an educational climate in the home. In order to succeed in changing parents into educators it has been considered necessary to identify the factors in parental behaviour that contribute the most to improving children's performances and to teach them to parents. This approach constitutes the dominant philosophy in the majority of American intervention programmes as is shown by the work of Ira Gordon, who has identified 19 principal factors influencing children's performance which parents should learn to recognise and to develop (Gordon, 1970).

This attempt to transform the parental function into a profession, to turn parents into specialists, can be interpreted as a new phase in the strategy of institutionalisation. In fact, if it is possible to define a parental specialisation with an appropriate training programme, there is nothing to stop the recruitment sooner or later of a body of professional parents to whom children's education will be entrusted. (Quarti, 1978). The interest and attention with which several administrations are studying programmes affecting child minders or family crèches on the one hand responds to the need to perfect a day care system, but it can also be interpreted on the other hand as a first step in the direction of professional parenting. In this regard, projects recently developed in the United States based on home visitors instructing mothers on how to manage relations with their children better probably represent the most sophisticated attempt yet made on this subject.

In turning the mothers into specialists, the professionals operating especially within the education system are seeking allies who will prepare the ground for their own activities, breaking down resistance and creating the most favourable conditions for their success. After having seen the limitations of their own programmes time and time again, it was deemed necessary to intervene at the source, in the "mother-child" system.

Finally, the institutional character of these practices is shown by the development of a formal education for parents offering them models of educational behaviour. If an alliance is sought with the parents and an effort is made to bring their educational behaviour into line with the principles guiding professional intervention, a strategy is developed that bypasses the difficulties raised by the education and socialisation of children and the expansion of institutional practices. Knowledge of these principles becomes the key to the successful education of children (Bernstein, 1975).

iii) Historical evolution of professional practices

The nature of the relations between services and professionals on the one hand and users on the other cannot be dissociated from the choices affecting the mode of operation, working methods and intervention techniques taught and employed by the institutions. It would thus be proper to analyse these practices, but before embarking on a task of this nature it is appropriate to broach the subject of the very origin of the instruments of intervention with which the professionals equip themselves. When the problem is posed in these terms, the immediate temptation is to reply that the instruments are chosen according to the users and their problems. We must therefore start by considering the classification of the problems to be resolved and the definition of the clients of services (Mérignas, 1978).

Looking at the history of social institutions, it can be seen that defining and seeking the clientele has always constituted a central problem, to the extent that the policy of expansion and the organisation of services can be regarded as a constant effort to identify the users. Basically, at least three successive phases can be distinguished (55), three different fashions, so to speak, that have characterised the development of institutions active in the social sphere.

It was last century that the need to organise public charity arose, when those responsible for the services decided to control the distribution of benefits so as to prevent people from receiving aid from several sources, each operating without the knowledge of the others. Two trends characterise this period: i) the professionals organising themselves to prevent abuses by the users; ii) the emergence of organisation as a necessity for co-operation.

The second phase commenced when the extension of all services had advanced a long way, when there was a sufficient diversity of services and when there were many professionals in the various specialisations in the fields of social work and education. A quite new necessity now arose: it was no longer a question of organising to protect services against the wiles of the poor, but of protecting "clients" against over-zealous or too well-intentioned professionals. This phase reached its apogee in about the fifties, when it was realised that the utilisation of services was far from satisfactory because the different agencies were dealing, to differing extents, with the same cases and neglecting the most disadvantaged.

The transition from the second to the third phase was effected during the sixties, with a critical revision of the theories followed before. In the first place, the ideology of the war against poverty and positive discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged caused a reversal of opinion on the supposed over-abundance of services. Once again the accent was on the scarcity of benefits and services and their under-employment in relation to the size of the needs. Then the end of the economic boom and the reduction or freezing of the sums allocated caused public agencies to revise their practices and unite to be in a position of strength in negotiations for the distribution of funds. Two strategies came into fashion: integration of services under a single agency and community action, both in fact being strategies aiming at the same goal, an increased and better supply of services.

Thus, through the attempts to resolve the problems posed by the presence of multiple services and many specialists, it is possible to see the emergence of theories of social work that are based on different models of interaction between professionals and their public. The needs here evolved "from protecting clients from over-use, to motivating them for use; from protecting society against the dangers of duplication of cash, to the protection of individuals from the institutions which were designed to aid them; from the reform of social work manpower skills to their expansion" (Rein, 1970).

The problems posed by the aims of social work, the social image of the profession, the limited efficacy of the resources and competences in the face of the real causes of the plight of the disadvantaged, combined with extreme division of labour that has multiplied the number of specialisations and inflated the number of staff and administrators are so many factors that go to making the professional milieu extremely complex. It is therefore wrong to consider the professional world as homogeneous, with its members all reacting in the same way. There is not a professional block opposed to a block of parents. However, since they are able to organise themselves into associations with common interests, the professionals are certainly in a better position to impose their views and play a dominant role.

6. ISSUE: PUBLIC SERVICE VERSUS PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS

Another "historical" controversy which in fact reappears periodically, having peaks of strong popularity and latent periods (the alternation of which is seen to be by no means arbitrary if one looks at events outside the field of children's services), is that which opposes the supporters of a generalisation of state-run public services for children to the defenders of privacy. On the one hand, those who would like the State to establish a network of care and educational services capable of accepting all children, on the other those who deny the right of the State to intervene in the ECCE sector and refuse public solutions which, because they are state-run, would be favoured and constitute a threat to the range of autonomy of the family in the area of children's care and education.

Recently there has been a resurgence of criticism of public services, identified as one of the causes of social malaise and the educational problems posed by children and adolescents. The following statement neatly sums up part of this position:

> "Our analysis brings to light a paradoxical situation. In fact even if the weak involvement of parents is the essential cause of the current malaise, the parents themselves cannot do very much to change this situation. As we have already seen, it is not the family, but rather the other institutions of our society that determine how and with whom children spend their time. Now, it is these institutions that have created and perpetuated the world in which our children live and grow up: a world where the ages are segregated and which, through this very fact, is often amoral and antisocial. Amongst the institutions which, because of their structure or their limited interest, have encouraged the development of this social disintegration, the schools have pride of place." (Bronfenbrenner, 1970).

To this type of criticism can be added another that accuses state public institutions of being instruments of the dominant class to discipline society. Finally, it is the principle of non-interference in private family affairs that is more generally defended, and on the positive side parents' liberty of action and the right to choose:

> "Our major policy issue in the United States of America concerning parents revolves around the notion of government intervention or, as is stated by some, government intrusion, on the parents and

other family members. The issue is about the extent of such intervention and the challenge is to provide services without jeopardizing parental and family rights." (Grotberg, 1979).

"American praise for the institution of the family has long been accompanied by a hands-off policy. Attempts to support and guide the directions of family efforts in child-rearing can quickly raise fears for the sanctity of the family. Some persons and groups feel such efforts to be an intrusion into private life ... Others fear the undermining of their cultural traditions and mores ... Any program of aid to families must therefore clearly demonstrate its aim as support to parents in achieving more effectively their own goals for their children". (Education Commission of the States, 1975).

"How can we improve services to those in need without infringing on individual initiative, rights and freedoms? How do we solve problems that have multiple causes and multiple consequences in a society that places high values on pluralism, local initiative, and a high degree of specialisation? What rational means can be found to establish priorities for government interventions in a world of scarce resources and competing claims on them?" (National Academy of Sciences, 1976).

Declarations of this sort, more or less forcefully expressed, can easily be found in other countries; they do not merely reflect a situation peculiar to the United States. The success with which they are now meeting can have many causes that need to be throughly checked and interpreted. It could be for example that they are the outward sign of a rejection impulse against bureaucratic complexity or even that a critical threshold has been reached in the multiplication of services. Certainly there is at least one contingent cause that provides an easily exploitable argument: the economic crisis and budgetary restrictions that offer material data for founding a theory in opposition to the type of social policy practised up to now, a theory critical of the welfare society in the name of the principles of liberty and private initiative on the basis of which this very society developed.

The present renewal of interest in laissez-faire policies and the violent denunciations of state control certainly express a protest against the lack of respect for diversity and a demand for better protection of individual liberties; but these political attitudes are also a demonstration of the power of the middle classes, who wish to be protected from all governmental intervention.

Criticisms of state interference in the relations between parents and children are based on a number of facts and convictions of which the following seem to be the most common and well-founded:

- families have a cultural heritage, a symbolic capital consisting of values, beliefs, traditions, knowledge, customs and concepts of life;
- families wish to continue to transmit this capital to their children;
- they are in a position to do so;
- they defend themselves against any interference which absolves or prevents them from doing so.

Family feeling is sufficiently strong to provide powerful resistance to projects which directly or indirectly might weaken the family's role, but it is also sufficiently fragile to be quite easily destroyed or stifled in given circumstances. It follows from this that there is a need to introduce policies aimed at providing the conditions under which families could satisfy their aspirations.

If families are prevented from doing so - and this may be done more or less directly - a string of harmful repercussions occurs which in their turn become so many reasons for justifying later corrective intervention. The family nucleus disintegrates, the children are neglected and families withdraw into themselves, with resulting social isolation, passivity, resignation, dependence, lack of initiative and the like. In discussion of these views two points in particular should be borne in mind: the real effects of family policies and of other legal measures on family life and households; and the potentialities and forms of support policies which enable families to fulfil their functions as they would wish.

A better knowledge is needed not only of the policies put into effect but also of families and households. In this connection, attention should be paid to at least the following three aspects:

- the internal problems which are specific to the dynamics of family relations so that the factors of disturbance can be identified;
- household structure and the network of family relationships in which each family is integrated in order to identify the functions for which the network partly or wholly assumes responsibility and the circumstances governing its action;
- the functions that families can no longer perform or which they perform with increasing difficulty owing to the social and economic changes in industrial society. Some of the factors specific to modern society increase the weight of family responsibilities and make them more complicated:
  - . childhood lasts considerably longer than it did in the past. Parents not only have to bring up small children, protect them and provide them with care, education and food, but in a climate of love they now also have to be capable of

following the child's progress over a long period as he grows up and goes to school, and guide, protect, support, encourage and maintain him;

as they get older, children are no longer able to make an early choice of career, generally determined in advance from a rather limited collection of possible occupations. On the contrary, the transition to active life has become an extremely long and complicated process with a very broad range of choice from among some 20,000 occupations now listed, calling for very different requirements which affect the child's education and training;

the family has only partial control over the child's development, and as the child grows up, the family has to share him increasingly with other agencies of socialisation and hence with a growing number of specialists with whom it has to learn to negotiate and co-operate.

Families probably do not meet their most serious difficulties when performing the traditional duties associated with small children. It is the complex data they have to master as their children grow up which change their role and entail new problems likely to have repercussions on family relations as a whole.

This brief account of the criticisms of government action in the education of small children and of the protection of family independence may help tone down the bitterness of the controversy. There is in fact no incontroversible argument excluding either parents or the State from responsibility for the problems of children and their education.

It would be a mistake to maintain that social workers can pretend to give orders, impose models and dictate their duty to families. This is neither desired nor needed. In most cases where outside agencies intervene there is certainly no wish or intention to act in this way, but there is something to be said for drawing attention to dangers and consequences of certain practices which fail to respect the desire and determination of families to decide for themselves.

On the other hand, while recognising the role of families it must be admitted that parents cannot by themselves take over total responsibility for the education of children. In fact, they have always received financial support or assistance in this task, in one way or another, and particularly from relatives. Today, because of the increased isolation of families and the disappearance of the processes of mutual aid which used to operate automatically in traditional societies, the need to give families support is considerably greater than in the past. And it is difficult to believe that this need can be met without any participation or commitment by the authorities.

IV

CRITICAL ISSUES

In order to understand better the difficulties that crop up in discussions about policies for children and that tend to block decision-making processes, it is necessary to identify more clearly the various problems arising at the level of management and information.

1. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

The choice of a programme is the outcome of a selection process whereby one solution is chosen from among a number of possibilities. The criteria are determined by the analytical framework adopted for the understanding of a given problem; it is the diversity of interpretations which leads to proposals for acceptable solutions. It is therefore essential to be aware of the variety of possible interpretations if one is to clarify the issues at stake and facilitate the decision-making process.

If we consider the fragmentation of services, this situation can be explained from at least four different standpoints:

- In the first place, it could be said that fragmentation is simply the reflection of the specialisation that has brought about increased division of labour in the fields of social work and education. Therefore, fragmentation is simply the price that has to be paid in order to have high quality services, staffed by competent professionals.
- Secondly, fragmentation could be explained as the effect of advances in knowledge. As soon as a certain body of knowledge becomes established and is recognised by society, those who produce it or administer it set out to obtain a professional status that will amongst other things give them a means of controlling the production and use of their stock of knowledge. The most characteristic manifestation of this process of "canonisation" is the establishment of professional bodies and demand for public status, either through legal recognition of the status or through codification of the training path, in particular through its inclusion in university courses.
- Thirdly, fragmentation can be considered a particular form of operation of the administrative apparatus. Through increasing services in cash or in kind, administrative agencies occupy the ground, increase

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the number of staff and their power. Competing or proliferating services are in this case not the result of chance or of poor management, but of an intrinsic law, one might almost say a necessity for survival as far as the administrative apparatus is concerned. If it is admitted that administrative agencies are not passive, not simple executors of government directives, but rather active agents taking initiatives and setting up programmes, it can readily be shown that many services form and develop in order to prevent competing sections of the administration from extending their power or gathering weight.

- Finally, fragmentation may follow from the multiplicity of real life situations with which administrators are faced and which they must take into account. According to this interpretation, the diversity of services and facilities is but the reflection of the diversity of social reality: because large and ill-housed families exist, there is a corresponding specialised service to look after them; because there are battered babies, there are children's protection and guardianship services; thus there will be a service for adopted children, another for the badly nourished, one for psychotics, and so on. In this case, it is no longer the administration that is responsible for producing distinct services, but social situations considered as objective facts.

The process of programme choice starts with reaching consensus on the interpretation of the problem itself. This process will run smoothly if there are converging interests between the various groups and alliances that neutralise any conflicts likely to paralyse all development. These approaches are therefore more political than technical. Consequently, the way the organisation of educational and social services develops is ultimately marked by the influence of dominant groups, the compromises that have had to be negotiated and accepted following the emergence of new equilibria, and the ideologies that have prompted one particular perception of social problems rather than another.

The possibility of arriving at contradictory interpretations is therefore perfectly normal, above all for problems relating to children and their families. Not only are children different from one another, each expressing his own individuality, but also their social function varies according to social class, culture and from one period to another. There are innumerable variations in family milieu which also vary in function according to culture. This leads to an enormous number of plausible explanatory models of children's lives, each one emphasizing different combinations of the factors which constitute the child's environment. Finally, professionals have their established points of view from which children and families are regarded. This multiplicity of perspectives and theoretical models which affect the initial interpretation of a problem represents one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome when implementing policies for children.

The variety of family situations militates against programmes aimed at obtaining a certain social uniformity, imposing a model of society or correcting divergences from official standards. Diversity in this respect therefore tends to be seen by managers as provocation and by scientists, professionals and administrators as a field of investigation.

One can look upon the whole range of research instruments that form an integral part of the operation of educational and social services as an attempt to cope with these problems of knowledge and management (Foucault, 1975): the household surveys used for fiscal purposes (56), the social service questionnaires, the psychological tests and interviews, the inquiries and consultations, and the case work practices. These instruments have made it possible to collect an enormous amount of statistical and descriptive data. However, these efforts have been uneven: many important aspects of daily life are not known. In the childhood sphere alone, it has to be admitted that in many cases it is not known where young children are cared for, nor by whom, how many are entrusted to third persons, how families help each other, what the role of the relatives is - just as we are equally unable to explain why there are periods when the birth rate rises and others when it falls. Our accumulated information has made us sophisticated enough to recognise that the picture of life and descriptions of family situations that is now available to authorities is imprecise.

i) Professional categories

The diversity of professional categories is another source of difficulties for management. All the professionals in the social services are not united into a single professional association with a controlling body that regulates and co-ordinates the training, registration and further training of its members. It is more a case of a mosaic of different professions:

- which may be more or less closed, thus with differing rates of ageing or renewal, depending on recruitment practices;
- each pursuing a more or less aggressive policy of expansion with respect to the neighbouring professions or limiting itself to holding its ground and maintaining its audience intact;
- having a more or less admitted and recognised status;
- having been in existence for a long time and thus having its own already established tradition or for a relatively short time and thus having a different growth dynamic;
- having its own more or less strictly laid down training procedures.

Theoretically, it is to be expected that the behaviour of the members of each profession is marked to a greater or lesser extent of these factors (Wilensky, 1964). For example, for a long time there was a considerable distinction between elementary school teachers and nursery school teachers, the former profession having a higher social status, with higher salaries and a more demanding training curriculum, while the latter was not regulated until later. The current trend is towards unification: the differences are gradually disappearing and in several of the countries where they still exist it can be seen that nursery teachers are becoming more insistent in their demands for equality of treatment with their primary school colleagues.

Among the new professions there are numerous tensions between neighbours, to such an extent that they constitute almost a normal part of daily professional practice. These tensions should not be overlooked because they can exert strong pressures on the users and the decision-makers who influence state intervention in the social sector in one direction rather than another. The course of relations between different professional groups can often help clarify in a very interesting perspective the political and administrative stakes.

In order to understand the user reactions as well as the real impact of certain political or administrative decisions, it is necessary to know the internal dynamic of each profession. This permits a better understanding of how individual agents behave, what their real influence is and what type of interaction is established with the persons with whom they are in contact: do they impose their own solutions or are they sensitive to the reactions of those they are assisting and thus ready to modify their behaviour, their point of reference and their convictions? These questions, which are vital for a true picture of professional practice, lead to the view that a study of the internal organisation of professional bodies (i.e. their structure, regulation, history) is essential. Thus, for example, a fact as simple as the number of people practising a certain profession at a given moment can already facilitate the explanation of several phenomena. Take for example the pressures exerted by nursery school teachers to support their claim for equality: this movement no doubt has important political significance because it presupposes decisions that imply budgetary consequences that will be accepted only if all the effects relating to the training, practices and status of the people concerned are accepted, i.e. all depends on the role to be assigned to nursery schools. Now, the claims will start to be taken seriously once the number of agents involved is sufficiently great to allow them to organise themselves to give more weight to the claims and support more strongly the political action necessary to succeed. Analysis of the numerical strength of a profession is thus very significant in interpreting certain phenomena or evaluating the impact of a policy.

Just as analysis of the numbers in a profession can offer several insights into which policies are implemented and an evaluation of their real effects, other variables, such as the regulation of recruitment, the social origins of agents, and training paths, should permit a more adequate and detailed analysis of the practitioner's action. In practice, the divisions existing within the professionals offer an ideal ground for political manoeuvering and they therefore need to be known in detail. Here we shall consider three sources of staff divisions: hierarchical divisions, divisions according to specialisation and divisions according to social origin.

a) Hierarchical divisions

The hierarchical system not only provides career paths but also a framework for controlling the activity of subordinates to ensure uniformity of provision within the same service or institution. In practice, however, it is difficult to obtain this uniformity. Confronted with the real needs of children and families, agents directly in contact with them have widely differing reactions: one head of a crèche will scrupulously apply the directives when establishing waiting lists, while another will give priority to the most disadvantaged or needy mothers; similarly, within a crèche, the head may restrict staff contact with parents, but there will also be staff members who disobey the instructions and more or less secretly join forces with the parents. Talking of social workers, Rein and White note the same reactions:

"There are at least two different responses to this practice dilemma. Social workers can become more insistent advocates for their clients and accept claim promotion as a major facet of their work. In doing so, they may come to view themselves as lawyers protecting their clients and they increasingly have recourse to the courts to redress grievances. However, the more effective they are in these efforts, the more they will alienate the agencies they need to work collaboratively with and possibly also their hierarchical superiors." (Rein and White, 1977).

The hierarchical structure not only multiplies grades and professional categories with all the attendant specific personnel policy problems (appointment criteria, stability of employment, use of pressures, internal divisions according to salary levels, privileges, promotion, disputes and appeals, etc.), but above all generates different attitudes towards everyday practical problems that the arsenal of instruments cited above can only handle with difficulty.

b) Divisions according to specialisation

The development of new specialisations, such as those connected with the clinical or therapeutic use of psychology, for example, modifies intervention techniques and calls into question accepted positions. The resistance and the reactions provoked amongst teachers by the introduction of school psychologists in an area of work where they had long held an undisputed monopoly, the difficulties now being encountered in several countries (for example in Belgium and France) in trying to include educators amongst the staff of crèches (who basically have health training), the problems encountered by general practitioners in the United Kingdom when the social services were reorganised (Rein and White, 1977), all these are known examples of obstacles produced by the increasing specialisation of social and educational labour. What is at stake in the redefinition of working relationships is not only the quality of services or the increased sphere of influence of one service in relation to the others through controlling a greater number of families or children but also the status, prestige, authority of one profession with respect to the others. Thus teachers may feel themselves threatened by psychologists, crèche staff by nursery school teachers, social workers by educators and so on.

The risk of a potential paralysis of services resulting from these divisions has been averted in two ways: by co-ordination measures, imposed from outside, or by internal adjustments giving rise to alliances between different professions. Spontaneous bonds are thus established between neighbouring professions in order to look after the health and education of children, as for example the alliance between psychoanalysts and educators within the framework of parent education or between psychoanalysts and psychiatrists in family counselling services (Donzelot, 1977). These bonds transform agencies' areas of intervention and modify their objectives. Administrative arrangements are set up in order to try to achieve effective co-ordination between different specialists, but the results do not always come up to expectations, since increased co-ordination in one sector is often accompanied by decrease in another sector (Rein and White, 1977).

c) Divisions according to social origin

To these divisions of a structural nature must be added those created by the social origins of members of the different professions. In fact, the everyday relations between professionals and children and families are not conditioned solely by scientific knowledge acquired during the training period, but also by subjective practical experiences, by knowledge picked up in the daily round, by values and judgements inherent in their own social class. Barbiana's school children have for example exposed the negative judgements on pupils of peasant origin given by certain teachers, who use bourgeois values as assessment and evaluation criteria, thus preventing an understanding of the reactions, interests, motivations and difficulties of children stemming from other social backgrounds (Scuola di Barbiana, 1967).

It is therefore important to know what social groups members of the human service professionals are recruited from, because this would enable a better understanding of their interaction with clients and with other professional groups. If it turned out, for example, that the social structures of the different professions were similar, the origin of difficulties in co-operation would have to be explained by other factors; if, on the other hand, the social origins of members of the different professions were significantly different (social workers coming mainly from a certain social category, nurses from another, educators mostly being recruited from the families of educators, pediatricians stemming predominantly from the upper classes, etc.), it could then be supposed that this factor could come into play.

Thus, on examining the world of the professionals closely, one can detect the presence of multiple divisions. These may be the source of considerable stresses and conflicts, and create numerous problems regarding the allocation of competences and privileges as well as the definition of internal power relations. Ultimately these divisions seriously affect the organisation and operation of public services, which explains the complexity and difficulty of the problems involved in their management.

ii) Fragmentation and co-ordination

Corresponding to the multiplicity of specialisations we find a multiplicity of administrative services, the dispersion of which makes any attempt to obtain an overall view of what is happening or to co-ordinate initiatives, programmes and policies extremely complex.

Co-ordination and fragmentation co-exist and are in certain respects interdependent. On the one hand, it seems that fragmentation gives rise to co-ordination; on the other, increased co-ordination seems to favour further division of competences and brings about subsequent forms of subdivision which, in their turn, try to escape the control of the co-ordinating authority. Therefore it might be supposed that policy for children should aim at finding or maintaining the best possible equilibrium between these two trends. For example, the decision to give a single Minister responsibility for all pre-school services, as was the case in Sweden, is a good illustration of this apparently contradictory twofold movement: an umbrella organisation that is supposed to regulate co-ordination and to exercise a real regulating function is created at the moment when services are being multiplied and wider powers conferred. The point of equilibrium between co-ordination and fragmentation should vary from one period or one situation to another, according to the strength of the decision-making bodies and their consequent capacity for imposing their own point of view.

Co-ordination and fragmentation are therefore two phenomena that cannot be dissociated. Co-ordination gives consistency to the system and prevents it from disintegrating under the effects of centrifugal force. It can thus be said that a certain degree of co-ordination is always present (Rein and White, 1977). In spite of some discontent, most services function satisfactorily and most people put up with the inconveniences due to administrative complexity. A certain amount of informal co-ordination allows the social services to function, without anybody knowing exactly what it is that enables this to happen. Despite this fact, the situation is not entirely satisfactory (Oheix, 1981), and this regularly gives rise to proposals aimed at introducing increased formal co-ordination.

However, the fact can no longer be ignored that co-ordination is by no means a panacea that is bound to ensure better services. On the basis of information obtained and studies carried out to date, it is already possible to state that, despite the apparent rationality of the idea of co-ordination, not all the interested parties, i.e. professionals, administrators and parents, are in favour. The professionals have often fought against integration or co-ordination (Weiss et al., 1981), and those responsible for the most far-reaching experiment yet in the integration of pre-school services, that of the Province of Alberta (Canada) have admitted that very intensive and costly efforts are necessary in order to eliminate misunderstandings, overcome distrust and remove suspicion so as to obtain the whole-hearted co-operation of all those interested (Canadian Institute for Research, 1978).

The fact is that the utility of co-ordination has still to be demonstrated on the empirical level, where other interests are paramount, notably those of children or parents, which do not necessarily coincide with those of the supporters of co-ordination. Hence the suspicion that in some cases co-ordination only seems to be tactics to resolve problems that really have nothing to do with it, such as, for example, the control of expenditure, the mediocre quality of services, the wielding of power, the insufficiency of resources. Consequently, if it is desired to carry through a reform based on co-ordination, it is essential to clarify the objectives, i.e. to define precisely what it is intended to achieve and to show that the objectives cannot be attained in any other way. On the basis of past experience, it does not appear that the resources can really be increased through further co-ordination, that the efficiency of professionals can be improved through the integration of services, that competences can be raised through collaboration within a unified service, and that knowledge is improved through administrative co-operation.

If this analysis is correct, whenever there are calls for increased co-ordination or criticisms regarding fragmentation it is necessary to pay attention to their source. They may be expressed equally well by a group in the process of imposing its power within the administration as by services that are losing part of their jurisdiction following the creation of a new service, both groups using the same argumentation to defend opposing interests. In this context, it becomes risky to express any judgement on the advantages or disadvantages of a particular situation, on the necessity to encourage reform in the direction of co-ordination, on the sterility of fragmentation of services. In fact, an evaluation of such analyses depends on the historical and political circumstances generating the demands.

2. INFORMATION PROBLEMS

1) The production of knowledge about children

One of the most significant indicators of increased interest in children is the growth of scientific research directed towards children and in particular the role that is accorded to it both in developments in educational practice and in the formation of political orientations. This considerable research effort, which swallows up substantial sums of money and employs a large number of scientists, poses essentially one major problem, namely the utility and application of the knowledge acquired.

Opinions on this subject obviously differ according to the functions of these concerned. The group most immediately involved and most convinced of the value of this activity and of the need for more research comprises the scientists who are the least hesitant in this regard, even though, as will be seen below, serious criticisms have recently been expressed from within their ranks with respect to research procedures and application of the findings. Several attitudes exist amongst the administrators: that of the official who is sincerely convinced of the importance of scientific research, well informed about the main theoretical and methodological problems, interested and critical in his dealings with the scientists and playing an active role in favour of research; that of the sceptical official who does not see exactly what contribution the scientists' output can make to help him modify social action and make it more effective, and finally, that of the opportunistic official who picks and chooses and uses the scientists as justification for his options.

The greatest reserve with respect to the activity of the scientists is, however, expressed by the politicans, who often have great difficulty in understanding scientific output and in accepting the autonomy and specificity of research activity. On this subject, White says: "The encounter between scientist and policy-maker or actor is not only an encounter of different attitudes and habits, but, more fundamentally, oftentimes an encounter of different presuppositions about the nature of knowledge. Take the most common instance. Many political actors see their tasks as dealing with many aspects of reality or, even, as dealing with a genuine and total reality; in contrast, the actor sees the social scientist as dealing always with a partial and abstract slice of reality. From this remarkable gross disjunction through to more subtle distinctions (subtle, but not trivial; for example, convictions about sampling or about the relation between thesis and evidence), the encounter is influenced by fundamental disagreements on first principles". (White, 1978).

This encounter is difficult because there are many suspicions on both sides, because collaboration between administrators and researchers is not easy to achieve and finally because under these circumstances there are many sources of misunderstanding and disappointment: on the one side there is surprise at unexpected results, on the other disappointment at the lack of appreciation and exploitation of what is delivered.

This situation can produce either negative reactions, such as a reluctance to vote additional funds for research after the inconclusive efforts made up to now (57) or positive reactions, such as a commitment to deeper analyses of the remaining problems such as modes of communication and working methodologies. This change in research orientations should particularly aim at enlarging the meaning of the concept of "legitimate knowledge" about children. It is currently considered that this knowledge consists only of what has been produced by the scientific tradition and more especially what has been verified under laboratory conditions. This model is unsatisfactory, however, since it rules out the possibility of taking other types of knowledge into account, i.e. those that exist within society and that develop along with it.

We have begun to realise the extent and impact of tradition and informal wisdom on parental decisions.

The different social groups make their own interpretations of social reality and resolve the practical difficulties that arise in everyday life or in special social situations (e.g. birth of a little brother or sister, death of a close relative, divorce or separation of the parents, long serious illness, etc.).

Parents, and more generally people who deal with children, overcome these difficulties by drawing on knowledge acquired from many sources: by what they have learned from their own experience, by reproducing the teaching received during their own childhood, with the help of advice from the entourage, other members of the family, friends and neighbours, preconceived ideas, through the guidance of specialists (e.g. family doctor, priest). Other knowledge reaches them through the main communication channels, in particular through popular treatises and more recently through specialist journals and the mass media (Gérome, 1981).

Finally, parents can also take advantage of the meetings organised specially for them. The information from all these different sources is more or less integrated and elaborated by each adult and the result of this synthesis appears in their educational choices and their spontaneous everyday relations with children.

Parents and adults working with children therefore have pedagogical knowledge which is not necessarily scientific, which has not been acquired through formal training and which is currently used in practice. For want of a better term all this knowledge might be called "folk wisdom". This knowledge, to which different sources contribute, concerns all aspects of children's lives: knowledge about children themselves, the educative solutions to apply in a whole host of circumstances, elementary nursing knowledge, services available, welfare benefits to which they are entitled and the procedures for obtaining them.

It is likely that practitioners working with children and families are acquainted with this folk wisdom and draw on it in their day-to-day activities, even if they never heard it mentioned during their training. It happens in fact that the practitioners also have their folk wisdom and they use it in the same way as the parents. Unfortunately, the fact that this type of knowledge is not studied during the training period prevents us understanding its significance, defining its real extent and richness, assessing its form and following its development. It is not a subject easy to explore.

The world of children and families is not transparent. People receiving assistance do not readily reveal themselves to interviewers, households have their regulating principles and behaviours that have proved themselves in controlling internal relationships and solving conflicts for years or even for generations and which cannot easily be given up. Even the help, advice and support of educators, social workers or doctors is integrated into an internal system that operates according to its own rules, the understanding of which, more often than not, escapes the outside observer.

According to Loux (58), an approach to the problems posed by the existence of folk wisdom should consider the following points:

"a) It is necessary to analyse mothers' knowledge and beliefs, seeking their significance and internal coherence, not considering them in isolation as if they were superstitions or prejudices. For example, in France the head of a new-born baby used to be left dirty deliberately. Doctors have attributed this to the mothers' negligence, but when this practice is studied in relation to others, it can be seen that for the mothers it was a preventive measure. The filth left on the head was seen as a protective layer guarding the delicate health of the child. Furthermore, health, which belongs to the body, is part of the body, has a symbolic significance like everything that is body. It is not a question of judging how well-founded or otherwise these practices are, but of understanding and analysing them as a coherent whole, if an effective educative practice is aimed at.

b) These maternal beliefs and practices are made up of contributions from various sources: family traditions, advice from neighbours, doctors, what has been read in the press, etc. What needs to be studied is how all this ends up by forming a whole with its own coherence ... What must be stressed is the importance of symbolic reference where the body or the child is concerned. Folk practices and beliefs are impregnated with this symbolism which palliates worries about the child's fragility.

c) Another problem I would like to stress is the importance of the secrecy of these practices. The doctor is often unaware of them, on the one hand because his relationship with the patient is one of authority, but also because the response of the patient, the mother, is often given in terms of silences, of transgressions, of recourse to her own practices, and I think that one of the keys to the symbolic effectiveness of these practices lies in these transgressions.

d) The importance of secrecy and silence is one of immediate methodological consequence: it seems difficult to study folk wisdom from within a medical or educational institution. It is necessary to go out and establish a certain complicity.

e) Another point to be considered is the folk wisdom of the practitioners themselves. In the surveys that I have been able to make, I have come to realise that there is no conflict between scientific knowledge and folk wisdom. Doctors have a folk wisdom concerning the body and children, acquired in their private lives, transmitted through the family since their own childhood, and this folk knowledge affects their own professional practice. It is thus interesting to note the gap between a practitioner's scientific knowledge and his actual practices and to observe the chinks in his scientific armour through which popular beliefs and reference to the symbolic enter.

f) In addition to the comparative studies necessary for understanding and interpreting this knowledge, provision should be made in the training of practitioners for ethnological instruction, stressing the fact that folk culture is not a non-culture, but a different culture. In my opinion this is an essential condition for an education that will allow people to take full responsibility for themselves."

The vital importance of traditional knowledge in the field of the education and care of children shows the limitations of scientific knowledge in this sector. It is necessary to study the spontaneous, everyday behaviour patterns in educational practices, in order both to improve the range of intervention tools at the disposal of the professionals and to obtain greater knowledge of the needs of the population, so as to propose development programmes for children's services that are both useful and usable.

Now, it is not easy to define all these practices, and the identification of sources of information remains complex because of the great variety of possible contributors. This is well brought out by the attempt to classify the resources in order to gather together the multiple forms of knowledge about the situation of children suggested by Lüscher:

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1. Individual biographies (highly subjective)
    - autobiographical
    - novelistic, narrative
    - documentary.
2. Case studies (isolating typical facts becomes possible through the selection of particular cases)
    - individual cases
    - series of cases.
3. Public opinion research (reflects "attitudes")
    - standardized questions
    - open-ended questions.
4. General descriptions of the child's situation
    - political commissions
    - official studies by experts
        - group studies
        - individual studies
    - individual monographs
    - reports on social indicators.
5. Evaluation studies
    - with respect to types of measures
    - with respect to categories of children
    - action research (researcher participates in the development).
6. International comparisons.
7. Historical analyses.

In spite of the details given, this list is unsatisfactory and leaves the impression of a methodological deadlock, as admitted in Lüscher's comments:

"Given the complexity of the relationship between human growth and the social environment and taking into account the limitations of scientific knowledge and the methodological problems inherent in the observation of real life situations, it seems necessary to pay attention to the knowledge of those who share and shape the everyday life of children. Parents and other caretakers may know more about children in many ways than do social scientists. An appropriate strategy would consist in systematically comparing the meanings that concrete situations have for the caretakers, for the children, if possible for the social scientists. ... This suggestion implies studying the so-called 'everyday theories' parents, caretakers and politicians have about children." (Lüscher, 1979).

In trying to make an assessment, we must nevertheless avoid going to the opposite extreme, overestimating the competencies of parents and the knowledge that they have of their children. There can be a blindness to understanding and admitting the behaviour of children on the part of parents just as much as on the part of scientists, and the opposite, of course, is also true. Just as there are scientists who show great perspicacity in the face of children's troubles, there are also many parents able to demonstrate great sensitivity and lucidity. Zappella, describing the case of children presenting forms of elective mutism, offers several interesting examples on this subject. He also points out that, within the same family, opinions may be divergent, and that the grandparents, for example, may be more lucid than the parents, that educators often have difficulties in understanding the child, and that specialists are capable of making serious errors (Zappella, 1976).

From these various observations a number of conclusions emerge:

- a good proportion of the scientific data on children only give a partial picture of real life;
- extensive and complex knowledge about children is disseminated throughout all social strata as well as in a very heterogeneous cultural heritage (art, films, literature, photographs, museums, etc.);
- practitioners confronted with everyday problems use knowledge belonging to the realm of folk wisdom alongside their scientific knowledge;
- failure to appreciate the importance, strength, efficacy and limitations of this folk wisdom is probably one of the causes of the lack of enthusiasm shown by politicians towards scientists' claims that the knowledge they produce is relevant;
- the effort necessary to discover, value and utilise this folk wisdom implies considerable methodological rethinking.

ii) Questions of scientific methods as they relate to research on children

A critical appraisal of the conceptual model and methods of research has arisen from within the scientific community. Certain scientists have brought attention to the inadequacy of the traditional scientific approaches. The general criticism is that of an overly narrow focus which does not account for the complex interplay of factors as they occur in situ. A lot of analyses have recently demonstrated the methodological and conceptual limitations of a large number of studies on pre-school education (Silverstein, 1977; Stambak, 1979; GEDREM, 1980; Tizard and Mantovani, 1981).

However, over and above these specific comments, it is the very conception of the organisation, structure, methods and objects of scientific research in psychology and education that is being questioned (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).

Development of a research methodology different from that inherited from the natural sciences is necessary in order to obtain an undistorted knowledge of the educational processes (White, 1978). For his part, Bronfenbrenner proposes that an ecological research method should be developed which would provide for the scientific study of educational processes within a natural experimental framework.

All these critical analyses of scientific research on children suggest the following comments:

- amongst the scientists themselves there are movements that call research methods into question and expose conceptual inadequacies in certain research strategies that have been used hitherto. These criticisms in a way confirm that the reserve expressed or felt by politicians and administrators with respect to scientific activity was not entirely unfounded;
- corresponding to this self-criticism by the producers of knowledge is a similar reflection amongst the sponsors and users of research concerning administrative practices and political attitudes affecting the problem of scientific knowledge of social life and educational problems;
- the growing tendency, both in Europe and the United States, to subordinate research to the needs of the administration can be interpreted as a sign of the need to orient the social sciences towards practical problems and to give more regard to the practical impact of knowledge. Consequently, practical situations are used to channel scientific activity, which, as a result, is unable to fulfil its proper role, which is to study practices;
- the need to encourage research in the sectors of education and social life is not a luxury which we can allow ourselves or not, according to the vagaries of economic trends, but a necessity for all our societies which follows from three facts:
  . developing research on new methodological and conceptual bases adapted to the object of the study (social facts, education, individual behaviour) is only possible by using research methods, learning from the failures and mistakes in the efforts to resolve the problems posed by the scientific study of social situations;
  . the knowledge produced to date is far from negligible; in general, thanks to research activity we are now more attentive to the existence of certain phenomena, to the implications of certain practices (for example, the traumatic effects of early institutionalisation of children, the utility of intellectual stimulation programmes, the intense interactions between infants, the absence of adverse effects on children cared for in good quality crèches, etc.) and above all we know the epistemological value of these researches better;
  . furthermore criticisms levelled at shortcomings in scientific practice have allowed vast unexplored areas and numerous relatively unknown subjects to be identified, a knowledge of which is indispensable to understand the contradictions and resistances

encountered in practice (e.g. the relatively weak impact of pre-schooling on working class children) and to develop solutions having a real emancipatory value.

In fine, cessation of scientific research on children would in the long term have disastrous effects on the development of educational practices and policies for them. The existence of difficulties, disappointments and doubts is not sufficient justification for halting a whole field of study and analysis that, at the same time, concerns scientists, practitioners, administrators and families.

V

TOWARDS A MORE FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN?

The extension of policies implemented for children, the multiplicity of measures for families with children, the magnitude of the research effort on children, the output of scientific literature dealing with children, and the growing commercialisation of infancy are significant indices of the interest shown in children in modern industrial societies.

Children have never occupied such a central position in society as today:

> "Children are not victims of oppression by adults, subjected to a unilateral flow of power, but the essential component of a system, its pivot. Infancy is one of the factors around which society is organised, it favourises a distribution of roles between adults: wider control appears in its name, not so much as against it as between the adults differentiated by it. Far from being unwanted, abandoned, children are omnipresent; ... The dominant sociological model we have to deal with is not that of enslaved and miserable children for whom it would suffice to claim their rights, but rather one where, metaphysically, children have swarmed into their own hives, but are enveloped by the society around it". (Schérer, 1978).

In the developed societies, what is commonly known as bringing up children can no longer be conceived in the same way as in the past or in other more rural societies. In the first place, social progress has made the exploitation, abandonment or loss of any child intolerable to the conscience. Secondly, as a result of changes in the social and occupational environment, families are less and less capable of coping with all the demands of bringing up children without outside help. Finally, the development of the educational sciences has brought about considerable changes in our knowledge of the processes of learning and children's intellectual capacities, as well as of their emotional life. It is therefore not enough to protect children, look after them and nourish them properly in order to bring them up properly. What they must be offered, what they must find in order to be able to express themselves, satisfy their wishes, learn to communicate, to formulate their potential for creativity is difficult to obtain only within the family; but this does not mean that families do not have a role to play, nor that institutions for the care and education of young children offer the best alternative solution. From this point of view, it might be asked if in fact the conditions in which children are presently brought up in developed societies are the most beneficial.

For many children the material prerequisites are not fulfilled. Many (the great majority of them poor children) are neither adequately protected physically, nor sufficiently (and especially, correctly) nourished. There are still too many children who grow up in an environment where the material conditions are poor and unhealthy: in overcrowded too small flats, or in dark, noisy dwellings, in districts with no parks, no playgrounds or even vacant lots. For a good many children the chances of a successful education are thus to a large extent already compromised before they even start.

To these deficiencies must be added shortcomings in the organisation of education, care and health services for children. In the social sector, the data concerning children at risk or social assistance to children are still impressive in almost all countries, yet at the same time little known. Thus, in France, it is estimated that 650,000 children are assisted by the children's welfare services and at least half of them are taken away from their families and entrusted to foster parents. In the United States, in a single year (1976) about 100,000 children were taken away from their families by court order (Keniston, 1977) and 255,000 children pass the greater part of their childhood cooped up in institutions (National Academy of Sciences, 1976).

Then again, pre-school facilities (crèches and nursery schools) are inadequate in almost all countries. In France, where there has for some years been a particular effort to improve care provision for children under three, only 5 per cent of this age group attend public crèches. Even admitting that it is not desirable that all children should go to crèches, it must still be agreed that this percentage is very low. In 1977, again in France, the number of places provided in crèches (public and family crèches combined) was about 60,000, while it was estimated that there were about 800,000 under-threes whose mothers went out to work (CNAF, 1977). This rather gloomy picture leaves no doubt about the amount of work that remains to be done before we have a complete range of quality services for young children in sufficient number to accept all the children whose parents wish to or need to use public facilities.

It must be admitted that the basic needs of many children are not yet satisfied and stressed that the extension of facilities is essential, given their complementary function in socialisation and education. Having said this, it is still an open question as to what kinds of institution and types of care, for it is necessary to know whether the models employed up to now are appropriate for favouring children's education. We ought to do more and we can do better for children, bearing in mind that the temptation to leave families to cope by themselves is no solution, and neither is the complete taking over by the State of all aspects of children's lives.

Administrators and professionals are certainly interested in the expansion of pre-school facilities, but there is also public interest in pre-school education. Public interest is not to be confused with the interest of public servants, even though in practice this latter is more concrete, visible and immediate than the former. For example, teachers are intimately concerned with the extension of pre-school education which could help resolve certain employment problems, the surplus of primary teachers being absorbed by the pre-school sector. Policies for children are certainly important on the labour market level. For example, in France the sector concerned with the care and education of children from 0 to 6 years of age currently employs over 500,000 women. It is therefore a very positive sector where jobs are concerned, and is likely to expand in the future, quite independently of demographic trends (Sullerot, 1981). The administrators, for their part, could use the increasing weight of their responsibilities and the additional burden of work occasioned by the increased clientele to support claims for higher salaries. Scientists, too, have vested interest in continued support of their research as well as scientific interest in dealing with children. However, it is difficult for these converging interests to take the shape of an alliance of forces with a view to vigorous political action in favour of a satisfactory policy for children. Politically speaking, three main options have been taken into account up to now:

- increasing the proportion of children in each age group accepted by public services. The services would not be increased in number and would continue to accept the same number of children, but because of the drop in the birth rate the proportion of children accommodated would rise;
- a certain number of child centres could be closed or the number of nursery classes could be reduced. The percentage of children benefiting from public services would remain constant for each age group and the authorities could effect economies while maintaining the status quo;
- the quality of services could be improved by modifying the standards enforced, which would be possible if facilities were not reduced, staff positions not suppressed, while continuing to accept the same proportion of children.

If we disregard the second solution, it would be possible to promote the expansion or improvement of public services while remaining within the limits of the budget presently available. This possibility seems to be a realistic objective in present economic circumstances, even if it must be admitted that from the political point of view realism could easily lead to opting for the maintenance of the status quo.

The solution of a policy combining expansion with improving quality is seldom proposed, but this has the disadvantage of running counter to programmes reducing public expenditure. However, the possibility of a development in this direction cannot be excluded.

Throughout the foregoing considerations we have stressed the importance of an education (in the broadest sense of the word) organised for children living in the developed countries, where the social, economic, medical, cultural and material conditions of life have profoundly changed the everyday environment of children during the course of the last few decades. This demand does not flow from humanitarian or philanthropical principles, but rather is the inevitable consequence of the forms of social organisation of our age, which while placing the feelings of childhood very high on the scale of social values, to the extent of making children the centre about which a good deal of private life revolves, has brought about a separation between children and adults, and the real and symbolic enclosure of children in their exclusive world.

It is therefore to be expected that pressure for a broader distribution of educational opportunities will not ease during the foreseeable future and this will probably pose serious problems for public authorities and the bodies responsible for policies for children. Thus, when considering future facilities for children and families and probable political trends in this sector, it is impossible to avoid a careful examination of signs announcing possible changes in the social context to see if there is a way of resolving these problems in a fashion that is appropriate to a policy in a period of economic constraints.

The structural changes now taking place in production methods and the organisation of work in the developed countries give some hint of the profound changes that may come about in the future in this area with possible consequences for the organisation of family life and relations between adults and children.

The following phenomena can already be seen to some extent:

- reduction in the duration of working life;
- reduction of the working week;
- different organisation of working hours;
- different pattern of working life.

We shall now survey these different points trying to pick out some significant effects likely to modify the forms of family life.

1. REDUCTION IN THE DURATION OF WORKING LIFE

In itself this is a process that has been going on for a long time and is the corollary of the steadily increasing productivity of the industrial apparatus. The duration of working life is shrinking as the result of major modifications taking place at three different points:

At the beginning, entering upon working life is becoming much more complex and longer than it used to be. In the first place, as a result of the general lengthening of compulsory schooling the transfer to working life has been considerably retarded in recent decades; secondly, a greater percentage of young people (girls in particular) go on to second cycle secondary education; finally, sandwich schemes or non-institutional forms of alternating periods of work and study will probably increase in the future with a delaying effect on entry to working life. In short, an increasing ratio of young people start work later than in the past, are reluctant to finally commit themselves to a career, remain unemployed for longer periods owing to a lack of working opportunities or prolong the non-work period by education, unemployment and other life experiences. Uncertainty about the probable career path is very widespread. The percentage of young people who, at the age of 20, have a steady job that they will keep for the rest of their working lives is now very low. Under these circumstances, young people's relationships with their parents are changing, their emotional and love lives are also affected and different attitudes towards marriage and the construction of the family to the traditional views are becoming predominant. More research would be required to study the connection, if there is one, between delayed entry to working life and the institution of marriage. In fact, it can be seen that the number of unmarried couples is rapidly increasing and that cohabitation is becoming increasingly popular:

> "In the United States in 1976 an estimated one million couples (about 2 per cent of all couples living together) were not married. It appears certain that cohabitation will become more popular in the near future. Its incidence has been increasing rapidly in Denmark, where more than a fourth of all women 18 through 25 live with a man to whom they are not married. In Sweden a recent survey found that about 12 per cent of all couples (aged 16 through 70) who were living together were not married." (Westoff, 1978).

Before drawing any conclusions with regard to these observations, it would be necessary to have confirmation of the strength of these behaviour patterns and especially a better understanding of the causes as well as the consequences for procreation, family life and the education of young children.

At the end of working life, by lowering the retiring age. An increasing number of occupational categories have in recent years obtained the right to take an early retirement. Furthermore, taking advantage of the economic recession, the practice of early retirement is being encouraged by several governments, which in a way reinforces the general trend in favour of reducing the duration of working life (table 20).

Table 20

ACTIVITY RATE OF THE POPULATION AGED 65 YEARS AND OVER
(AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IN THIS AGE GROUP)

	1965	1975	Variations
United States	17.0	14.0	-3.0
Japan	34.0	30.7	-3.3
Belgium	6.4	6.3	-0.1
United Kingdom	12.4	10.6	-0.8
Sweden	-	10.9	-
France	13.1	7.1	-6.0
Germany	14.0	9.9	-4.1
Netherlands	9.3	6.7	-2.6
Italy	10.8	7.0	-3.8
Denmark	22.8	20.0	-2.8
Finland	9.9	3.9	-6.0

Source: Demographic Trends, 1950-1990, OECD, Paris, 1980.

Thus, an increasing number of workers give up regular employment relatively young and, as average life expectancy has increased, they can enjoy a long retirement.

Considerable inequalities certainly still exist between the sexes and between socio-occupational categories, in particular as regards the quality of the retirement and the pension received. This raises many other problems but, from the point of view of children and families, what counts is the presence of grandparents who, having stopped work, could invest time in many activities of a voluntary nature, thus putting a considerable stock of experience and knowledge to good use.

During working life, the extension of the duration of paid holidays (table 21) is another important factor contributing to reduce the time devoted to work.

The holiday phenomenon has acquired significant proportions, particularly in the European countries, even though once more it must be pointed out that considerable sections of the population are but little concerned. Now, the significance of holidays varies greatly from one social class to another, as does the way of organising them and it would be interesting to examine to what extent the fact of having longer holidays affects family life and relations with the children and other members of the family. Do holidays occupy a special place in the life of the family? For the children do they provide the opportunity to snare in the lives of adults for a few weeks (an alternative to everyday practice during which new relationships can be tried out), or is the day-to-day life of the rest of the year reproduced during the holidays, relations between family members remaining unchanged?

Summing up these observations, it can be seen that working life is tending to be reduced from both ends: it starts later and finishes earlier, freeing time during the periods when families are normally forming (at the start) or transforming (the children marry or the grandchildren are born). Working life tends to be concentrated in the intervening years during which the family grows with the birth of the children.

Rearrangement of the pattern of work to take into account family obligations should constitute one of the essential components of future policies for children.

2. REDUCTION OF THE WORKING WEEK

Changes in working hours, and in particular reduction of the working week (table 22 and figures), could considerably modify certain aspects of families' day-to-day existence.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid getting the false impression of a peaceful society devoted to leisure activities as a result of the progressive extension of non-work time (59), it is essential to remember that changes of equilibrium in the daily routine are in response to a particular logic which is that governing the growth of industrial societies and that the production of free time fits into the framework of the general trend of the system of production. Consequently the use of this time, the way it is filled, is not so free as might be imagined and the notion of leisure is itself not neutral. It would therefore be mistaken to think that the existence of free time is beyond all constraints, for its production fits into a precise economic framework and responds to the specific demands of the social structure of developed societies (60). It would thus be unwise to jump to any conclusions about the ways in which this time is employed without first clarifying the context and the conditions that bring it about.

These brief remarks will suffice to draw attention to the complexity of the problem and the contradictions within it. To these external factors must be added the influence of personal factors (subjective experience of the world of work, socio-occupational status, place of residence, age, etc.) in order to get some idea of the difficulties encountered when attempting to determine the effects of the existence of this free time on the internal organisation of the lives of households (61). There is a general lack of experiments and information regarding the effects of free time on family life and parent-child relationships. Taking, for example, the latest German Government report on the family (62), the problem was only just touched upon by the commission of enquiry, as is in fact pointed out by the Government in its accompanying memorandum. The existence of this free time, the speculation and hopes to which it gives rise, should therefore be subjected to critical analysis with a view to determining the benefits that children might derive from it. Finally, the contrary phenomen should be kept in mind, i.e. the rejection of any changes in respect of working hours, which can also be a choice

Table 21

ANNUAL HOLIDAYS AND BANK HOLIDAYS

(European Community)

	Basic holidays for adults fixed by legislation			Basic holiday for adult wage earners in industry (collective agreements)		
	1960	1970	1976	1960	1970	1976
Germany	12	15-18(1)	18	12-18	16-24(5)	20-30
France	18	24	24	18	24	24
Italy	..	12(2)	12	12	12-15	20-24 (5
Netherlands(5)	..	10-12	15-18	12-15	15-18	20-21
Belgium	12	18	24	12	18	24
Luxembourg	8-18(3)	18-24(4)	20-22(4)	8-18(3)	18-24(4)	20-22(4)
United Kingdom	..	..	..	12	12-18	15-20
Ireland(5)	10-12	10-12	15-18	12	12-18	15-18(2)
Denmark	12	18	24	18	18	24
EUR 9	-	-	-	12-18	12-24	15-26

1) From the age of 35.

2) 1971.

3) 8 days during first 3 years of service, 12 days during 4th and 5th year; 18 days beginning 6th year with same employer.

4) From 18 years to 30 years; 18 days, 30 to 38 years; 21 days; from 38 years on; 24 working days.

5) Working days.

Source: Social indicators for the European Community 1960-1975, published in 1977.

Table 22

WORKING HOURS IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

(per week)

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Australia (1) 5,9 (*)	42.9	42.8	43.2	43.1	42.7	42.4	42.8	41.5	50.8	40.8	40.
Austria 1	38.4	38.6	38.6	37.4	37.[illegible]	36.4	36.0	36.0	33.9	34.4	33.
Belgium 15, 16	41.5	41.4	41.0	39.9	39.7	38.7	37.6	36.6	34.8	35.8	35.
Canada (*)	40.3	40.3	40.0	39.7	39.7	40.0	39.6	38.9	38.6	38.7	38.
Denmark 1	38.9	37.8	37.5	36.2	35.8	35.4	33.5	34.2	33.1	33.3	33.
Finland 1	39.8	39.1	38.8	38.3	38.5	38.2	38.0	38.4	38.4	38.2	38.
France	45.4	45.3	45.4	44.8	44.5	44.0	43.6	42.9	41.7	41.6	41.
Germany (*)	42.0	43.0	43.8	43.8	43.0	42.7	42.8	41.9	40.4	41.4	41.
Greece (*)	43.6	43.7	43.8	44.6	44.1	44.6	43.4	43.8	42.7	41.9	41.
Iceland											
Ireland 25, 26			42.9	42.7	42.3	42.3	42.2	41.5	41.3	42.1	42.
Italy	35.5	32.1	34.0	34.0	32.8	31.9	31.0	30.3	29.3	29.4	29.
Japan 2	44.8	44.6	43.9	43.3	42.6	42.3	42.0	40.0	38.8	40.2	40.
Luxembourg 15	43.9	44.0	45.0	44.0	43.6	42.4	42.3	42.4	40.8	40.6	38.
Netherlands 15, 26 (*)	45.3	45.3	45.1	44.2	43.8	43.4	43.0	41.9	41.2	41.3	41.
New Zealand, 9, 11 (*)	40.2	40.2	40.5	40.4	39.8	39.8	40.1	39.8	39.3	39.0	38.
Norway (1)	36.9	35.8	34.8	34.4	33.8	33.5	33.1	32.6	32.4	31.6	30.
Portugal	45.4	44.7	44.3	44.8	43.6	44.7	44.7	42.8	41.9	40.1	..
Spain	44.1	44.1	44.1	44.1	43.9	44.9	44.2	43.8	42.7	41.6	..
Sweden (2)		155	152	151	148	143	140	137	136	133	
Switzerland 4 (*)	44.7	44.6	44.7	44.7	44.6	44.4	44.9	44.8	44.5	44.4	44.
Turkey											
United Kingdom (1) 5	44.1	43.5	43.4	42.7	41.8	42.2	42.5	42.0	40.9	41.6	41.
United States (*)	40.6	40.7	40.6	39.8	39.9	40.6	40.7	40.0	39.4	40.0	40.
Yugoslavia(2) 8, 9 (*)	189	188	188	184	182	181	181	181	182	185	185

Source: ILO Yearbook of Labour Force Statistics and Italy Annuario di Statistiche del Lavoro.

1) Weighted by male and female employment in manufacturing.
2) Per month.
*) Paid hours, as opposed to hours worked.

1. Including mining and quarrying.
2. Including salaried employees.
4. Sampling design revised.
5. Series replacing former series.
8. August.
9. August of each year; prior to 1975: July
11. March and September of each year.
15. October of each year.
16. Excluding primary iron and steel.
25. September of each year.
26. Including juveniles.

beneficial to children. Such a situation occurs whenever priority is given to increasing revenues, thus leading to a higher consumption of goods and services, such as the education and care for children (63).

3. DIFFERENT ORGANISATION OF WORKING HOURS

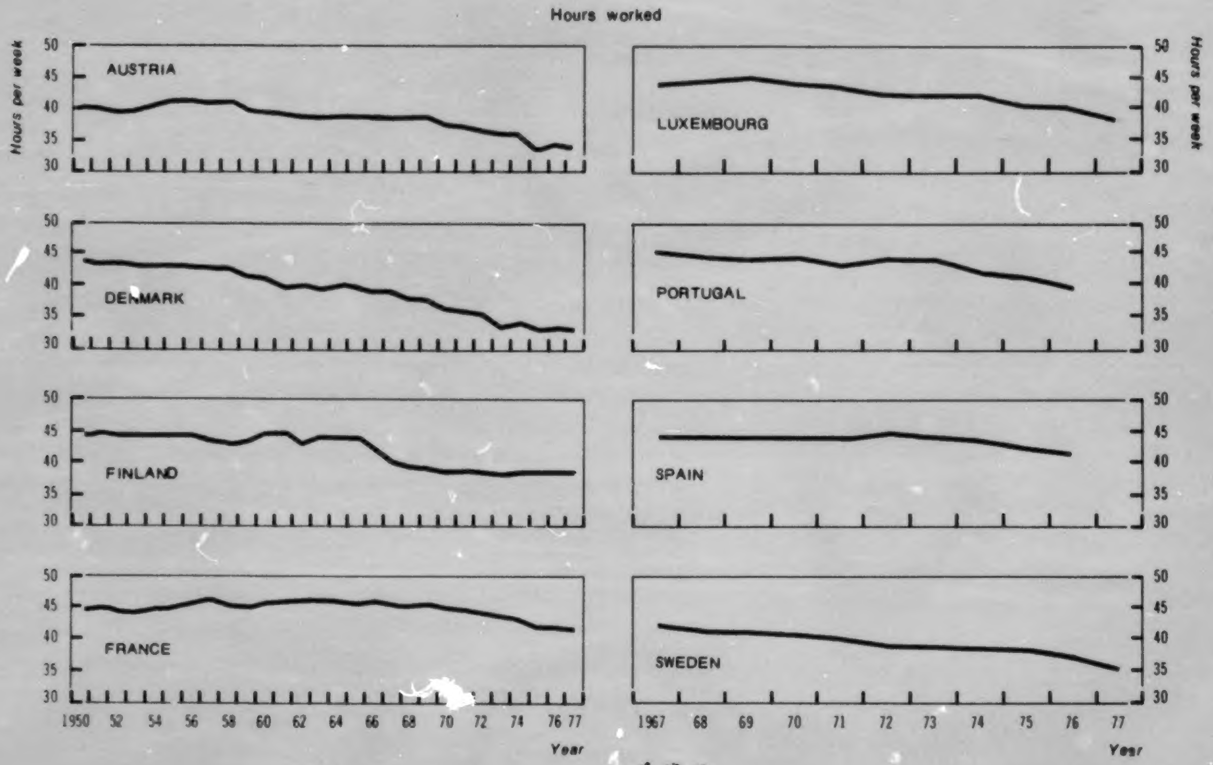
Here we consider the use made of and the impact of such arrangements as part-time, half-time, temporary work, shift work, and flexible working hours. Several facts show that the people most concerned by these practices are women, young people and older workers. This piece of information shows the great importance the extension of arrangements of this sort can have for family life, both positive, through increasing the amount of time the family can spend together, and negative, through extending conditions that allow working mothers to tolerate the burden of housework better without there being any changes in the distribution of roles and tasks within the household, as is in fact pointed out by the OECD report on the changing position of women in economic life (OECD, 1979) and demonstrated by several studies on family time budgets.

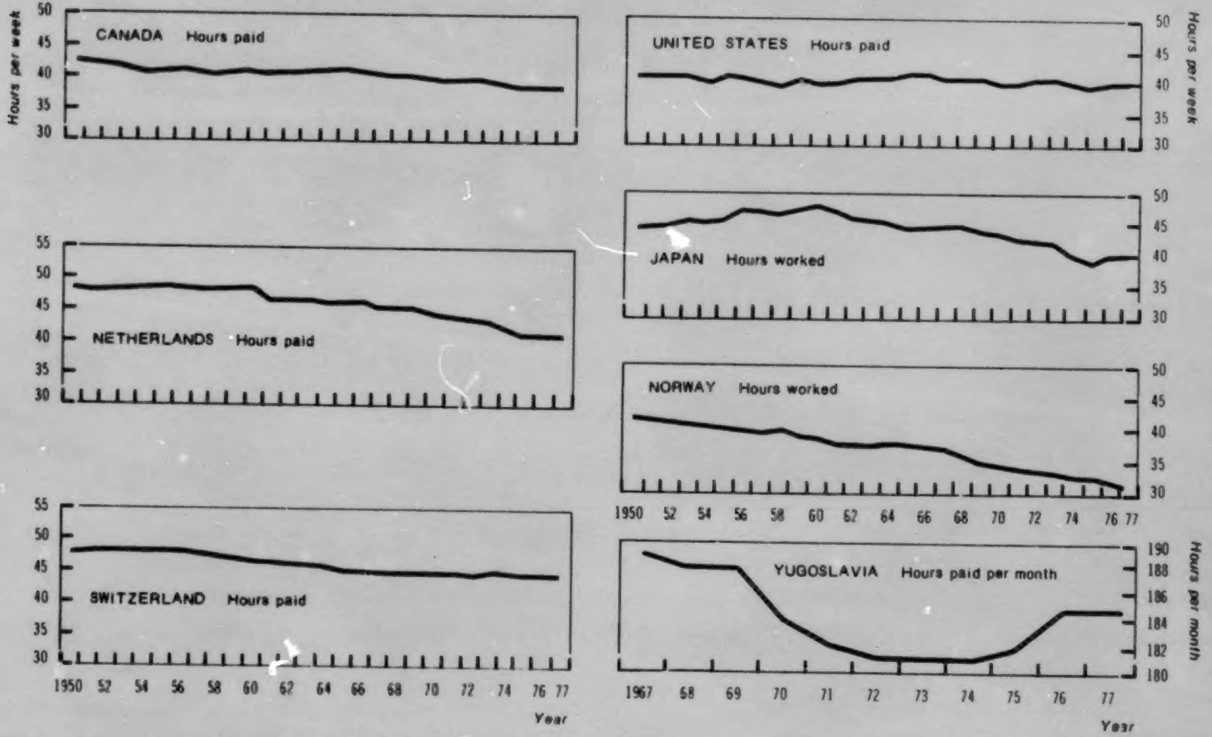
One must not be over-optimistic about the possible benefits that a general application of measures of this sort may bring for children. The critical observations made about the significance of reductions in the working week also apply when considering the implications of different patterns of working hours. It must therefore be admitted that the implications are ambiguous to the extent that, while essentially a rearrangement offers the possibility of enlarging the horizons of private life, which could have positive repercussions at the level of interaction with the children, on the whole there is no automatic change brought about in conduct and roles within the family circle. It would be naive to imagine that a change in the daily routine is enough to give rise to more education-conscious behaviour towards the children. Experiments need to be carried out to check whether more flexible working hours for gainfully employed parents is accompanied by better relations with the children, better co-operation with practitioners working in children's centres or a reduction in demand for care services.

4. DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF WORKING LIFE

The model of an uninterrupted working life, extending over several decades, is currently being seriously challenged. In practice in fact it is no longer continuity that is the dominant pattern, but rather discontinuity: periods of work, periods of unemployment, periods of short-time working, study leave succeed one another or alternate with one another, along with breaks in the career, changes of occupation, changes of location. Instability or uncertainty of employment still exist and

HOURS OF WORK PER WEEK IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR
(All industries)





Source : ILO Yearbook of Labour Force Statistics, except for Italy : Eurostat «Hourly Earnings · Hours of Work», and Sweden : Statistiska Meddelanden «The Labour Force Surveys». Data for graphs correspond to data shown in Table 22. Data of countries for which a long series (1950-1977) is graphed are basic data used to calculate «Annual Hours of Work».

changes or loss of employment in the course of a working life are far from being exceptional situations. It is in fact recognition of this state of affairs that lies behind the concept of recurrent education, drawing attention to the anomaly of organising a concentrated supply of education before the start of working life as if the career was going to unfold without any major changes thereafter.

The proposal to develop educational models providing for alternation between periods of work and periods of training throughout life was thus an attempt to take more account of developments in the labour market. Nevertheless, the difficulties encountered in implementing plans for recurrent education have shown up the magnitude of the obstacles to be overcome, and above all demonstrated that the free spaces generated by breaks in working life cannot easily be transformed into educational periods. Once again, it appears that the way in which these periods free of the obligation to work can be filled depends very much on the causes that produce these gaps and cannot be programmed independently of them.

But there are also other factors exerting an influence on the decisions and behaviours of workers confronted with problems of continuity in their careers that should be taken into consideration, but have been glossed over up to now. These are factors relating to private, family life and all its obligations. People who work are not simply workers, but adults having needs outside their careers, stemming from their private lives: there are heads of households, working mothers, single parents, adults with dependent parents, etc. Generally speaking, little attention has been given to family variables in analyses of recurrent education. The main preoccupation is with effects on the career and there has been relatively little analysis of the possibilities on the family side for exploiting the opportunities offered by the alternation of different kinds of life in general and by recurrent education in particular.

In this instance, the situation of working mothers should be stressed. For a good many working mothers there are at present only two solutions possible: either accept the stress resulting from the necessity of coping at the same time with two commitments, running the home and working life, or be forced to choose between the two. Now, this alternative is far from satisfactory: housework is not very attractive, and the majority of jobs that are open to women are scarcely any more so. Nonetheless, it must not be forgotten that many mothers seek work for economic reasons and for them there is in fact no freedom to choose. Therefore, measures introducing alternation in working life seem to be a means of allowing some flexibility in the present rigid organisation of life with its difficult or impossible choices and, in particular, of improving conditions of employment for mothers.

Now, in order that mothers may really derive benefit from the establishment of a different type of life cycle, substantial progress needs to be made on at least three fronts:

i) Generalisation of educational leave of absence for women

The institution of educational leave of absence ought to be generalised to offer women the opportunity to compensate for their initial educational handicaps and the chance to apply for more satisfying jobs. This does not mean to say that recurrent education is the panacea that will radically improve the lot of women, especially those working in factories -that would be too simple. Nevertheless, the importance that improved competence can have should not be underestimated: even if only on the occupational level it can mean improved self-confidence, greater faith in one's own capacities, new awareness of problems and difficulties, all of which is essential for strengthening one's self-image which is one of the preconditions for assuming and carrying the family role with less anxiety.

In a way it could even be said that the content and objectives of this training are less important than the opportunity it provides for getting away from the everyday context. The few experiments in this field that have covered a large number of working women (e.g. the "150 hour experiment" in Italy) (64) have shown the educative power implicit in the mere fact of offering the most exploited women the opportunity to meet one another, to compare notes on their own situations, to talk to each other outside the rhythms imposed by work and the closed framework of the household. In such circumstances, problems directly affecting family life, such as abortion, contraception, children's illnesses, their education, feeding - all of which subjects preoccupy the majority of mothers - can be freely discussed.

ii) Improvement in women's working conditions

All studies confirm that there are still considerable inequalities between men and women in the labour market: subsidiary jobs are mainly filled by women, there are inequalities in pay and in promotion prospects, in access to the more prestigious professions. The large-scale entry of women into working life has often occasioned a return to the advantageous conditions of an abundant labour supply without worrying about the social repercussions of unsatisfactory working conditions. In this situation, the advantages offered by working are not so great from the individual's point of view. Work very often brings neither a significant increase in the family income, nor a real opportunity for personal development, nor a real opening of horizons. Economic necessities being paramount, the right to work is guaranteed, but not in a manner appropriate to the needs of mothers. Consequently, efforts should be made to bring about a modification in the organisation of working life so as to take more account of the demands of family life and in particular the problems posed by the presence of children.

iii) Family leave

A more advanced form of parental leave which might be called "family leave" should be introduced so as to permit all workers with dependent children to interrupt their work, at any stage in their working life, for family reasons. This leave would be a sort of complement to study leave and ought to be conceived in the same way. Alternating with their work, people would have the right to claim both study leave and family leave without prejudicing in any way their statutory rights, nor their career or professional position, their interests being protected during the period of leave. The implementation of this form of leave requires the clarification of a series of questions, such as defining who is entitled to it, determining the forms and conditions of this leave as well as an estimation of its financial repercussions.

A first step in this direction is the adoption of "parental leave" granted to working parents, who can share it as they see fit. This form of leave was legally adopted in Sweden in 1974 and amended in 1978, giving working parents the right to nine months' leave, paid at 90 per cent of the regular salary, that can be used by one or other of the parents. Furthermore, the mother or father has the right to take leave up to two weeks a year to look after a sick child. This solution which, in the first place, recognises that parental responsibility is shared between the two parents, allows parents who work to cope with special events in family life (birth of a child or sickness) by stopping work and staying at home. It may therefore be asked whether restricting the granting of this leave to such precise circumstances takes sufficient account of other events that can occur in the life of a household, modifying internal relationships more or less profondly, giving rise to new requirements on the part of the children just as much as the adults. In the life of a household, there are not only births and illnesses, but also deaths, separations or divorces, remarriages, adoptions, removals. Households develop, grow or shrink, modifying the roles of their members. In a household, the worker is not only a young parent with dependent children, but can also have several other roles, depending on the development of the family or simply the passing of years. For example, a worker can be a child with dependent aged parents or a grandparent with dependent grandchildren. Multiple situations may thus exist involving relations with children and it would be desirable to adapt the legislation in such a way as to offer workers the necessary facilities for handling them in the best interests of the children.

The current changes which have so far been mentioned seem to herald an industrial society in which people will work less, so that everyone will be able to devote more time to himself, to what he wants to do, to take more pleasure in life and take more interest in those with whom he lives. It is thus probable that in a situation of this sort, the interest and attention directed towards private life, the family and generally everything personal will significantly increase.

On this subject the findings of a survey (Bosquet, 1978) conducted in France are significant. To the question: "If the working week were reduced to less than 30 hours, what would you do with your time ..." (table 23), 53 per cent of French people reply that they would devote more time to family life. The breakdown of the responses brings out very well the attraction that the world of the family exerts on all categories of adults considered.

Now, family life means above all relatives and children. It is therefore scarcely surprising that it should be the 25 to 34 age group that scores the highest preference for family life (61 per cent); this is the group of young couples with young children. This preference can probably be interpreted as the expression of a desire to spend more time with the children, to take the time to attend to them, play with them, take them out, enjoy their company. It might thus be concluded that when they are young parents know very well what they want: to spend more time together as a family.

Is it possible to derive any pointers from this trend that might be valuable on the policy level? Can it be taken, for example, that in the case of a general reduction in working hours, the state will have less need to build a vast network of crèches, nursery schools, medico-pedagogical services to mind, care for and educate young children, because the parents themselves will not only have the time to do these things themselves and thus no need to demand specialist institutions, but will even refuse to send their children to the crèche or the nursery school because they will want to attend to them directly? In the future, then, will there be a reduction in demand for services for children and finally a progressive emptying of crèches, nursery schools and other institutions, due to a lack of clients, who will stay at home? Can governments and public authorities count on these changes to diminish their commitment in the ECCE field?

The answer to these questions is not simple, and in any case great caution is necessary to avoid over-estimating the importance and effects of a trend that would allow central governments and local authorities to get off lightly from a situation of persistent unrest brought about by a strong unsatisfied demand for services. The fact that parents, grandparents and other adult members of households have more time available, spend more time at home, could bring about an intensification of relations with young children, an increased search and demand for knowledge about small children. It can be anticipated that the consumption of knowledge about children will become even greater than it is now. Living more in interaction with their children, parents will feel the need to understand them better.

Table 23

IF THE WORKING WEEK WERE REDUCED TO LESS THAN 30 HOURS WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

	Read, go to see a show	Watch television	Take part in running your community	See more of your friends, go out or entertain more often	Make and do more things yourself, buy less goods and services	Devote more time to family life	Learn more practical trades such as carpentry, dressmaking, etc.	Don't know
TOTAL	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Whole population	32	9	25	22	39	53	32	7
Men	29	9	29	26	35	50	28	9
Women	34	9	20	18	42	57	36	5
AGE								
18 - 24	37	3	20	31	40	49	43	3
25 - 34	38	4	26	24	39	61	41	4
35 - 49	35	8	31	17	43	54	33	4
50 - 64	29	11	26	22	40	54	25	7
65 and over	20	17	16	18	30	46	19	17
OCCUPATION								
Farmer, farm worker	17	8	20	14	42	52	23	12
Small trader, artisan	22	7	31	24	33	56	33	11
Senior executive, trader	52	3	45	32	26	42	35	5
Executive, clerk	49	3	33	27	42	52	36	3
Blue collar worker	21	7	23	19	45	55	41	2
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL								
Primary	20	12	18	19	39	54	27	9
Secondary	42	6	24	22	37	59	37	5
Technical or commercial ...	38	5	31	21	45	58	39	3
Higher	52	3	39	33	29	41	36	5
UNIONISATION								
TU member	42	3	43	18	32	57	34	4
Non-member	32	6	24	26	44	50	36	5
PARTY PREFERENCE								
Communist party	35	10	36	21	43	56	30	2
Socialist	32	7	20	23	43	53	35	6
U.D.F.	35	8	31	24	35	56	30	7
R.P.R.	33	11	22	23	38	57	36	4
Not stated	22	11	18	18	34	53	27	13

Source: M. Bosquet, "Vivre sans travailler?" in Le Nouvel Observateur 4 December 1978.

This need (already widespread amongst the middle classes today) to observe the children, follow their progress, buy objects and toys adapted to their age, inquire about the most suitable activities, will spread into other social milieux. But is this enough to lead us to expect a drastic fall in the demand for centres specialising in looking after young children and consequently to introduce policies unfavourable to the expansion of pre-schooling? Actually it does not seem very likely, especially if it is remembered that increasing attendance of nursery schools over a long period, and of crèches more recently, is not solely the result of social needs, but also of cultural needs, and in particular the conviction that it is of benefit for the intellectual, social and physical development of children.

Most probably, it will not be the demand for quantity that will change, but the demand for quality. The social control exercised over the nature of the services will increase, higher standards will be demanded, parental interest and participation in the running of pre-school centres will intensify. Generally speaking, increased demands can be expected: parents following their children's progress more and having more time for them, will demand greater flexibility in the organisation of services so as to be able to use them according to their own and their children's needs, and they will want to take a more active part in the life of the institution, thus becoming more active partners than they are now. The educative function in pre-schooling will come more to the fore, while the welfare and care functions will diminish in importance. The parents having their contribution to make, and what is more being in a position that allows them to make it, the nature of the institutions will be profoundly changed, and entirely to the advantage of the children, provided that, and it is a big proviso, the professionals will be flexible and commit themselves to discussion and revision of their practices.

VI

POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE

In the foregoing we have tried to describe some probable changes that will take place in certain aspects of the way of life in the years to come and point out the consequences that could result for families and households. In so doing, we have been careful to avoid any forecast of demographic trends, or the growth of families, because there exists no firm foundation on which to base hypotheses about the reproductive behaviour of future generations. It therefore does not seem possible to say whether in the next few decades there will be more or less children in the developed societies than there are now, whether fertility rates will not change significantly, or whether we shall emerge from the Malthusian period being experienced in almost all OECD Member countries. Instead we have preferred to concentrate on what might be called the time budget, and look at the changes in it that appear likely in the light of the production methods being adopted in industrial societies.

If our indications are correct, it may well be that we are entering upon a "family era"(Shorter, 1975, Lasch, 1977): family members will have more time available to spend together, to run their own affairs, plan common initiatives. The changes observed in forms of cohabitation, in the ways family nuclei are constituted and in the organisation of households do nothing to weaken this trend: the most varied forms of family cell remain special places for emotional and social investment, constituting an environment that people can and still wish to control, an intimate, protected place where they can maintain an identity that is threatened elsewhere by depersonalising technical and social trends. The future of children in developed societies will thus probably fit into a social framework in which parents will have more time to spend with them. It can therefore be expected that children will be the object of increasing emotional investment within the family. Under these circumstances, what responses should be developed by the authorities, i.e. what direction should policies for young children take?

To begin with, formulation of future policy will be conditioned by the interpretation put on this trend and the use made of it.

Thus, it might be considered that:

- this trend is very much in favour of the education of children within the family and there is consequently no need to increase the supply of services, these becoming to a certain extent superfluous, seeing that the children could be looked after by their parents;

- this trend is very much in favour of the development of specialist services for children: the public being more aware of the needs of children than in the past, they will demand increased provision (demand pressure will rise), but also an improvement in the quality of services as well as in the operating conditions of institutions which should be capable of offering all children the educational assistance necessary to have a real chance to succeed;

- interesting and innovatory as this trend may be, it will not significantly modify adult-child interactions within the family and will do nothing to change the living conditions of disadvantaged children. There will always be children who need special support and the authorities will always be faced with the necessity of intervening as they do now. What needs to be discussed is neither the principle nor the dimension of this intervention, but its form. From this point of view, more attention should be paid to critical evaluations of the results obtained to date and intervention instruments should be modified accordingly.

These three types of reaction could thus lead to different kinds of commitment on the part of the authorities in the future and we shall now attempt to define these by putting forward for consideration three different political approaches:

- the generalisation of public services, where the necessary resources will be brought into play to enable a continual increase in the network of public facilities with the aim of covering the whole infant population;
- the limitation of state intervention to no more than the maintenance of the network as it is today; further investment to increase the size of the public sector being refused;
- widespread experimentation seeking conditions favouring a pragmatic approach enabling the changes and measures most appropriate to specific situations, and the abandonment of global programmes with their uniform procedures.

1. THE GENERALISATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

i) Description

An expansion policy requiring the authorities to develop facilities for children until education, health and care services are generalised. The objective of this policy is to make provision for the whole infant population of pre-school age, so that all parents who wish to take advantage of it, either full-time or part-time, may do so.

a) Motivations

Lying behind this policy are first of all considerations of a statistical nature, then a certain number of convictions. Statistically, it is demonstrated that the number of children accepted by pre-school institutions is far from being satisfactory everywhere (as shown in table 24), that the use of public facilities only benefits a minority of pre-school-age children, that it is not always those who need them who use them and that the gap between supply and demand for services for children remains very wide. The statistical balance sheet thus appears to be somewhat negative and that relating to the operation of services rather unsatisfactory. The conclusion is that there still remains a lot to be done.

Amongst the convictions shared by the majority of expansionists, it suffices to mention two that are the most widespread. The first concerns the special role attributed to the State, considered as the organ that can and must offer all citizens better conditions for the full development of the personality as well as a real freedom of choice. Public authorities are considered to be in the best position to protect children against neglect and deprivation, to correct social injustice and offer quality services giving all children the best possible chance of blossoming fully.

The second conviction assumes that group education and care experience outside the family environment are beneficial to young children and perhaps necessary to them. Furthermore, under certain circumstances they benefit not only the children, but also the parents and could contribute to improving family educational practice.

The motives behind moves in favour of continuing expansion of public intervention are therefore twofold. On the one hand, the desire to compensate for unfavourable social conditions in order to give equal opportunities to all children; on the other, the wish to generalise conditions guaranteeing an optimal level of care and education.

b) Objectives

- Development of nursery schools

From this point of view the primary objective of an expansion programme could be the generalisation of nursery schools so as to offer sufficient places for all children between the age of 2 - 3 and the age at which compulsory schooling starts. This objective has virtually been attained in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, where it has been demonstrated that almost total coverage of needs can be achieved, that it is socially useful and that it is beneficial, or at least not harmful, to the children. All other Member countries are far from having such a complete provision of nursery schools operating all day long: either general attendance for at least one year has recently been achieved, or the emphasis is on fulfilling the needs of minority and particularly disadvantaged groups. Nonetheless, the expansion of this institution may now be considered an irreversible trend. The debate in the United Kingdom, the pressure of the Portuguese population, the policies

Table 24

INCREASES IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ATTENDANCE

(in %)

	1970	1975/76	+ (%)
Austria (children from 3 to 5 years)	29	55 (1)	+ 26
Germany (3 to 6 years)	45	70	+ 25
Belgium (3 to 6 years)	96	98.9	+ 2.9
Canada (3 to 6 years)	54	76	+ 22
Denmark (3 to 6 years)	20	43	+ 23
France (3 to 6 years)	84	93	+ 9
Ireland (4-year-olds only)	63	65	+ 2
Italy (3 to 6 years)	62	66.2	+ 4.2
New Zealand (4 to 5 years) (3 to 4 years)		50 50	-
Netherlands (4 to 5 years)	90	95	+ 5
Portugal (0 to 3 years) (3 to 6 years)		3.46 (1) 8.08	-
United Kingdom (0 to 5 years)	7	13	+ 6
United States (3 to 5 years)	37.5	45.2	+ 7.7
Sweden (0 to 6 years)		22 (1)	-
Yugoslavia : Serbia Slovenia		11.5 (2) 47 (1)	

(The figures indicate attendance at public or private schools, without distinguishing between full- or part-time attendance.)

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1) In 1977.

2) In 1975.

implemented in the last few years in Scandinavia and Germany, the concern of the Yugoslav Republics and the current debate in the United States are all significant pointers.

- Extension of crèches

As regards facilities accepting children under two, needs are satisfied to a much lesser extent, the density of crèches being nothing like as great as that of nursery schools, their implementation having been contested for a long time. The violent polemics of the past on the harmfulness of public day care for children's development as well as arguments of an economic nature connected with the costs of building and running crèches for a long time aroused hostility towards the care of young children being taken over by public authorities. This resistance has now been broken down to some extent: distrust has given way to indulgent observation; the public image of crèches has gradually changed from their being virtually medical and welfare centres to being educational centres, from being a closed milieu to an open environment. Several factors have contributed to mitigate the kinds of disapproval against crèches that used to be fairly widespread, but certainly one of the most important was that having children minded by third parties outside the family was a very common practice, especially popular in urban areas of some countries.

At this stage and from a public point of view, it was better, instead of continuing to ignore the situation, to take cognisance of it and try to counter the most serious disadvantages. It was no longer possible to be unaware that the results obtained in crèches are less than catastrophic, the children attending them seeming to develop quite normally (i.e. like other children who did not spend the day in public crèches), contrary to certain predictions. Finally, recent provision, with more flexible organisation and operation, based on criteria of quality, has demonstrated that more attractive infant care practices than the "traditional services" were possible.

The supporters of crèches are calling upon the authorities to commit themselves to an explicit ECCE policy, providing for a development programme leading to a real public service that will be able to offer different types of care in sufficient volume to be able to accept the children of all those parents who would like to use these institutions. In the coming years the authorities should give more attention than formerly to the problems of caring for children under 2-3 years.

Tizard and Mantovani (CERI/OECD, 1981) commenting upon the findings of an official survey dealing with a representative sample of children under five in families in England and Wales (Bone, 1976), while admitting that there is still some dispute over the extent of coverage to be provided for the under-threes (or possibly under-twos), consider that public ECCE services should be supplied for at least:

- 20 per cent of children under one year old;
- 40 per cent of one-year-olds;
- 70 per cent of two-year-olds;
- 90 per cent of children three and over.

These figures, which are based on the preferences stated by mothers and which could therefore be considered to express demand, demonstrate the existence of a pressure for extending provision for the under-threes and are indicative of a trend towards forcing the authorities to take this path.

- Generalisation of medical care

The same policy of expanding public services for children is proposed in the medical care sector, where two principal trends can be seen: the medicalisation of everything connected with childbirth and the extension of routine medical monitoring of children. Compulsory pre- and post-natal examination programmes, the establishment of medical record files, systems for early detection and taking charge of children at risk, the multiplication of services for children with special needs, provision of dental care and other similar measures all fit into this pattern.

There are, of course, considerable differences between Member countries, particularly as regards the compulsory or voluntary nature of the programmes and whether the services are free of charge or not, but constant progress in medical protection and preventative measures for children of pre-school age can nonetheless be observed in all countries.

These examples suggest the form a possible expansionist policy in the domain of early childhood may take.

- Characteristics

The aims of this policy are fairly imprecise, leaving the door open to many interpretations. This favours the formation of sizeable pressure groups resulting from coalitions of several interested parties who do not necessarily share the same points of view. National situations play a decisive role here.

We shall now consider the principal arguments which are used in favour or against this approach. Some have already been discussed in previous chapters and we shall avoid repeating these in extenso.

ii) Arguments in favour

a) Covering needs

A policy of expansion should satisfy all current demands, amongst the clearest indications of which are the waiting lists to be found at many centres. What is more, the offer of services in sufficient quantity would mean that many parents no longer had to resort to makeshift arrangements often of a dubious nature and offering no guarantees for the well-being of the children. The principal beneficiaries of this policy would be families where both parents go out to work or the mono-parental families who are particularly penalised at the present time.

b) Diversification of the supply

The multiplication of services would favour the development of a whole range of forms that are now scarce or restricted to centres. In present circumstances where the supply is inadequate it sometimes happens that the distribution of facilities is uneven and that certain regions are more favoured than others. A large-scale expansion programme can compensate for or correct the inequalities and balance the distribution of institutions between different regions.

c) Easing access

One of the major obstacles to children's attending centres is the lack of diversification in the type of care, the few centres that do exist all having the same structure and being more or less reserved for a specific clientele selected according to social priority criteria. Society's image of day-care centres could be modified if access to them is no longer subject to restriction (i.e. when there are enough centres) and when they are made more attractive by diversifying types of care, thus allowing parents to choose the formula that suits them best, or which seems to them best suited to their children's needs.

d) High standard of quality

The necessity to take into account a more diversified clientele and not just concentrate on disadvantaged children means that more attention must be given to the quality of services. It is generally considered that the quality versus quantity dilemma is difficult to resolve and the less services there are the better their quality will be. Conversely, the greater the number, the poorer the quality. However, expansion does not in itself bring about a diminution of quality. The decompartmentalising of centres so that they accept children from different social classes is necessary in order to modify the nature of the institutions (which no longer merely seem to be welfare or social rehabilitation centres) and to transform staff-child and staff-parent relations. The climate within the services changes, which in itself is already a considerable advance, when one thinks of the difficult and sometimes deplorable operating conditions of many institutions reserved for poor children.

e) Community control

As we have just seen, multiplication of services gives access to a more heterogeneous clientele. The number of parents directly interested in the way child centres are run increases and it becomes more difficult for the professionals to carry on their activities autonomously, imposing their own choices and inclinations without involving the parents. The poor and the disadvantaged very often have had to accept what they were offered without being able to put forward their own opinions for fear of being denied services that they could not do without. In a more open situation such abuses could disappear. Furthermore, the extension of services will also have the effect of interesting not only the parents, but also an increasing number of citizens, administrators, militants of political parties and trade unionists in the problems of infancy. What is more, the increase in the budget to be voted and administered to support the expansion effort should attract the attention of members of the community to the way in which the institutions being financed are run.

f) Creation of jobs

The effort to make good the deficiencies pointed out in crèches, nursery schools, welfare centres and day-care centres ought to create a number of new positions. Furthermore, compliance with the standards generally laid down in many countries regarding the number of adults required to look after the children should lead to improved staff/child ratios where these are still low by creating new sections or engaging additional staff.

A policy of expansion is a desirable solution during a period of unemployment because it is one way of creating jobs. An objective like making pre-schooling universal for children of three and over and the development of services, of centres for children, day nurseries and play centres should lead to the creation of a considerable number of posts accessible to people with pedagogic training, but out of work because of cuts in the compulsory educational sector. Arrangements for retraining and conversion to new professional tasks will be necessary, but these should be feasible unless problems concerning salaries and unions turn out to be too great.

To this optimistic view, it might be objected that it is a delusion that employment problems among teachers can be solved by transferring specialists from one sector to another because the present drop in the birth rate will mean that there are not enough vacancies to fill. Be that as it may, a percentage of the teachers currently unemployed could be absorbed by the pre-school system in certain countries if the decision were taken to increase the number of classes and significantly improve the staff/child ratio.

The creation of new public service posts can be brought about not only by increasing recruitment, but also by multiplying specialisations, which would allow new professions to develop alongside those recently established: consellors, organisers, psychotherapists, dietitians. The range can be further extended for an ever more refined and professionalised taking charge of children.

Finally, it will be noted that expansion is vital for the professional organisations; it allows them to enlarge their own spheres of influence, establish areas of responsibility, obtain social recognition. Thus it might be said that there is a mutual cause and effect relationship between the multiplication of services and that of the professions dealing with young children, thus explaining the fact that among the most active groups fighting in favour of expansion the professionals are well to the fore. If growth in the number of specialisations in the ECCE field continues, it is probable that the influence of policies for children on the labour market will go on increasing.

g) Improved standard of health

Over a period of decades, the main effort to develop services for children was made by the medical profession confronting the desperate problems of infant mortality, of often fatal infectious children's diseases and the after-effects of accidents at birth that caused serious and irremediable handicaps.

Considerable progress has been made in decreasing the rate of child mortality (Chapter I) and in improving the general condition of health of the child population in industrialised countries. However, the results achieved in the medical sector are still not satisfactory and it is necessary to continue efforts towards the expansion and improvement of pediatric services. Despite the relatively low figures achieved in most Member countries, the number of child deaths remains important, and this constitutes a challenge for medical progress. In the most advanced countries, there is still an average of about 10 children per 1,000 who die at birth, another 10 who die during the first four weeks and finally two or three more who die before the end of the first year. Confronted with these figures, the Committee on Child Health Services in the United Kingdom stated: "In contemporary terms, infant mortality is a holocaust equal to all the deaths of the succeeding 24 years of life." (Court Report, 1976).

It is therefore probable that a considerable effort by the public authorities will be called for in the next few years to extend and improve medical care during pregnancy, birth and the first few years of life in order to reduce the number of deaths and diseases, all the more so because the number of births has sensibly diminished. Developments in prevention, protection, surveillance, early diagnosis, treatment, help, will result in an extension of pre-natal care, which will probably be provided as a matter of course given the certain correlation between lack of pre-natal care and increased risk at birth. This trend will necessitate a reorganisation in hospital maternity wards, in particular through installing more premature baby and intensive care units, as well as by "completing" local medical teams and finally by implementing regular post-natal examination and care as has already been done, for example, in Sweden and Germany.

It must also be noted that the investment necessary to obviate as far as possible the risks associated with birth is not only necessary from the medical point of view, but is also a question of economics: in fact, the effort made to reduce the risk of long-term illness or handicap is more economic than the social security or invalidity insurance expenditure necessary to support handicapped children for years.

iii) Criticisms

a) High costs

The most obvious drawback of an expansionist policy is that the investments required to finance a programme of systematic development of facilities in the early childhood sector is necessarily considerable. Multiplication of services is synonymous with higher costs. Now, the supporters of a policy of this nature defend their position by claiming that it is wrong to present the case simply in terms of costs, as if it were a matter of expenditure with no return. Nevertheless, attempting to express the effectiveness and return of these investments in figures presents great problems. As was pointed out in the study on rationalisation of budgetary choices for types of day care for the under-threes instituted by the French Ministry of Health in 1971:

> "the effects produced on the community by the system of day care for children can be seen in terms of the impact on female employment, the birth rate and child development. They are very difficult to determine and it is obvious from the outset that they will be very difficult to aggregate". (Chapalain, 1974).

The demonstration thus remains shaky and convincing evidence is lacking. Now, however well-founded they may be, assumptions are no basis on which to obtain the necessary political support for planning a development that requires considerable financial resources.

Another weakness is the difficulty in obtaining a precise picture of total public expenditure devoted to children as seen in Chapter III.

Furthermore, in order to give an accurate interpretation of a society's investment in children, the sums spent by the private sector, which in some countries are very considerable, should also be taken into account. Without this information, it is impossible to say whether on the whole the public authorities in a given country spend a lot or little, have increased or decreased their commitment for children. This uncertainty is unfortunate because it leaves the way open for all sorts of assumptions and the most varied interpretations. Expansionist groups consider that we could do more and do not spend enough: non-expansionists think the opposite. The former probably underestimate budgetary constraints and the limitations of public authorities; this considerably weakens the force of their arguments. Not having given sufficient attention to how expansion is to be financed, they end up without the necessary figures to make their case.

b) Bureaucratisation

One of the most general criticisms draws attention to the dangers of inflating the administrative apparatus implied by further expansion of public educational and social services. In fact, the concept of expansion is highly ambiguous: it could mean that an increasing number of children benefit from the services, i.e. that there are more clients, or that the network of facilities is multiplied and differentiated, i.e. that the infrastructure grows or that the number of professionals and administrators increases.

It is generally believed that these four variables are directly correlated and evolve together in the same direction. Simplifying the formula, it can be said that the number of administrators increases proportionally to the number of administrated, but several analyses show that this is not always the case, and that the number of administrators can increase more quickly than that for the administered. The declared aim of expansion is to reach a greater number of beneficiaries, i.e. to help a greater number of children, but the result obtained is often quite different: instead of the services being expanded so that more children benefit from them, it is the administrative and institutional apparatus that grows through the creation of new committees, multiplication of intermediate levels, extension of control mechanisms, and so on.

This trend can lead to paradoxical situations when, despite development efforts, the number of children and families using public services does not increase. In these circumstances, the search for clients becomes a top priority task to avoid triggering off protest movements that could lead to the financing and growth of the system being blocked. Further, there are reform programmes , the side effects of which are often increased friction between different agencies fighting for their share of the clientele or of the specialists available.

Competition between professionals, administrative friction, coordination projects, integration attempts thus almost inevitably accompany the growth of social service and educational organisations. It is therefore to be expected that in future, if the expansionist trend continues along the same lines followed up to now, these phenomena will take on increased importance, requiring greater resources if a crisis in the future is to be avoided.

c) Open-ended programmes

It is difficult to define the limits of an expansionist policy. In a sense, expansion can go on for ever, with constantly renewed objectives, and is difficult to control: the stopping point cannot be determined in advance, because there will always be the possibility of new needs that have to be fulfilled, of raising standards, of creating new kinds of specialists who will be on the lookout for new clients, as new modes of intervention and styles of organisation go on evolving.

This trend can be illustrated by two examples. The first concerns an integrated global project for implementing children's services in a "priority urbanisation zone" (Zone à Urbaniser en Priorité - ZUP) in France (Mozère, 1981). Here it was a matter of creating a new facility in an urban context that was also new, free of traditions and not "conditioned"; the way was clear, therefore, to try out a certain number of ambitions. Now, the statement of the objectives of this project is itself indicative of the temptations of an open-ended process:

> "- Ensure a continuous, flexible, rich and reassuring educational environment for children from their birth to the age of 12 and avoid discontinuity in terms of time, location and personnel.
> - Achieve responsible and continuous co-operation between parents, educators, welfare workers and health officials designed to take complete charge of children in every aspect of their development and at every period in their lives (family, education, leisure) with a view to the harmonious development of their personality and the prevention of handicaps". (p. 129).

The second example concerns the "priority categories" proposed by the Department of Health and Social Security in England for admission to nursery care (Tizard, 1981). The relatively detailed list includes:

- children of the mentally ill,
- children of the socially incompetent,
- children of deserted mothers,
- children of unmarried mothers,
- children living in grossly overcrowded conditions,
- handicapped children,
- neglected children.

Nevertheless, as Tizard immediately points out, needs defined on the basis of these categories are considerably underestimated, because other categories could also be taken into consideration, notably the following:

- children of pathologically depressed or anxious mothers,
- children living in single parent families,
- children of large families,
- children of low-income families,
- children of migrants,
- children of students.

This classification already includes thirteen different groups, but the exercise could be continued and the definition process refined to produce an even longer list.

These two examples are indicative of the problems confronting the expansionist strategy. What is particularly striking is the all-embracing tendency, one might say the voracity, of the system from which no situation should escape. It will thus be always capable of improvement, will demand constant correction, and will tend to expand indefinitely, fixing its own laws of reproduction, as is quite well illustrated by the second example.

In order to justify growth, the expansion strategy here resorts to the theory of needs. In itself the procedure is relatively simple: first of all the criteria for recognising needs are established, then the needs are located, and finally the corresponding response is provided by the creation of appropriate facilities. The process thus acts as a mechanism for adjusting to needs the definition of which in terms of social utility is the crucial stage. Now, this phase is very complex, because the needs can be modified or created because the list of criteria for defining them can be differentiated almost ad infinitum and because the detection instruments can always be improved. Now, the more needs are defined, the more it will be felt necessary to attend to them, the more practitioners and administrators will be required and expansion will be all the more justifiable. The veritable mania for classifying and defining needs found among expansionist groups, and of which the list previously cited is but one example, is thus understandable. The theory of needs plays a central role in this scenario, because it necessarily adds to the interventionist vocations.

d) Inadequacy

Another criticism that could be levelled at policies of indefinite extension of public services is that they are not geared to social and economic trends.

As we have already seen, there are many reasons to believe that in industrial societies the distribution of time between work and family life will be modified in favour of the family in the future. Parents in the first place, but more generally the adults of the household, will have more time available for private life. If the growing interest in family life and in children by numerous surveys and public opinion polls is maintained and developed, it is likely that parents will want to find the opportunities and means in their environment that will allow them to satisfy their desires. Any planning that underestimated the extent of this phenomenon would be likely to be wide of the mark. Growth without precise aims, which would multiply the number of services, create over-equipped centres, foster increasing numbers of specialisations and of professionals who would take over the greater part of educative work, would be in danger of running counter to these ideas. The risk of seeing parents deprived of their responsibilities by the multiplication of sophisticated institutions where the staff have the monopoly of specialist knowledge and technical know-how should not be underestimated.

This does not mean to say that, in order to avoid encouraging delegation of the parental role, we should drastically reduce the number of practitioners and institutional centres because this would cause parents to take direct responsibility for the problems of children's development. Instead we would simply stress the necessity of envisaging different types of care and different ways of using centres from those currently prevailing.

2. THE LIMITATION OF STATE INTERVENTION

1) Description

This second approach could be called reductionist in contrast to the first, even though freezing expansion does not necessarily imply a reduction in the range of services offered today. We will not make this distinction here, and will use the term reductionist to designate any movement generally opposed to giving the State additional responsibilities in the social and educational fields, without specifically calling for a policy of dismantling the network of public facilities already existing.

a) Motivations

According to supporters of this view, the State's responsibilities in the ECCE field are now too extensive: the growth of social legislation has eaten away the rights of parents who find themselves faced with an increasing number of obligations; the population has to bear increasing tax burdens to finance services that only benefit a small percentage of children. The conclusion is therefore drawn that this state of affairs cannot go on for ever and that a brake must be put on any growth of the influence of the State and its administration.

These considerations are manifested in a political discussion that is extremely reserved about any development of the Welfare State and particularly opposed to any extension of legislation in the field of early childhood, where the responsibilities and rights of families should be respected as much as possible.

b) Objectives

In general it is admitted that public institutions should be provided to cope with desperate situations and extreme cases, but the generalisation of services is opposed. The debate about day care and the resistance to the extension of pre-schooling are good illustrations of this attitude.

- Resistance to the development of crèches

The starting point is the principle that day care should remain an exceptional service, run solely for children who cannot be looked after in some other way. Crèches would be accepted only as emergency solutions, tolerated as being the lesser evil for a certain number of children, and the extension of this form of care to make the service available to a larger public is therefore opposed. Various arguments are used to justify this resistance: in the first place it is asserted that this institution is the most appropriate one for children in difficult family situations; then, to avoid being discriminatory, an attempt is made to show that crèches are generally detrimental to children's development unless certain conditions are met; finally, the emphasis is put on the high cost for providing quality care.

- Resistance to expansion of nursery schools

The case of crèches is probably the most revealing of the hesitations and reservations found among the apologists of this political line, but other matters can be found that arouse the same type of objection, such as for example nursery schools, the development of which was also strongly resisted for a long time in several countries. The development of pre-schooling in recent years, however, is an indication of changing attitudes, for instance in Germany where the number of public institutions has almost doubled between 1970 and 1976 (see table 25).

Nevertheless, despite this spectacular growth it will be noted that the reservations have still not completely disappeared, as is shown by the half-hearted efforts to extend nursery school provision sufficiently to be able to accept all children from the age of three. The nursery school cause is not yet entirely won. Such an extensive system is considered a luxury that we can afford to do without in periods of economic recession, nursery schools remaining for many a half-measure, accepted mainly because they obviate disadvantaged children's having difficulties at school.

Summing up, the principal goal of a restrictive policy is to prevent public services for children spreading beyond their present limits, and to take more advantage of existing facilities, the present utilisation of which does not always seem to be the most rational. Basically the apologists of this policy favour a freeze that should encourage concentration on the most extreme cases, and the development of different ideas for using centres and better exploitation of the educative potential of families.

- Safeguarding individual values

It must not be forgotten either that at the origin of these reservations and worries is often a deep attachment to individual values

Table 25

PROGRESSION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN GERMANY

Year	Institutions				Available places					
	Total	Public institutions	Private organisations	Private enterprises	Total	In public institutions	In private organisations	In private enterprises	By institution	For 1,00 children
					Crèches					
1965	438	244	168	26	18 108	11 622	5 697	789	41	6
1970	520	294	173	53	17 457	11 973	4 352	1 132	34	7
1975	829	522	245	62	24 251	17 587	5 374	1 290	29	13
1976	857	534	261	62	24 388	17 874	5 217	1 297	28	14
					Nursery schools					
1965	14 113	2 971	10 650	492	952 875	190 425	740 293	22 157	68	327
1970	17 493	3 830	12 870	793	1 160 736	234 097	898 192	28 447	66	385
1975	23 130	6 401	15 873	856	1 478 856	395 345	1 054 528	28 983	64	655
1976	23 680	6 834	16 074	772	1 463 025	406 664	1 030 607	25 754	62	705

1) Children under 3 years of age attend crèches.
Children between 3 and 6 years of age attend nursery schools.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden.

and family life, the function and specificity of which are believed to be of fundamental importance. Holders of this view are thus extremely sensitive to any measure that threatens to reduce personal independence or interfere in the sphere of private life. The validity of these convictions will not be discussed here, but we point out the particularly critical view of the role and dangers of the Welfare State that stems from them.

Thus, it is considered by the reductionists that the present extent of state intervention is no longer compatible with the function that first brought it about, which was the fight against poverty and its effects. Furthermore, it is not uncommon in this regard for the extension of services to be criticised because instead of encouraging families to be more active, it aggravates their state of dependence, poor families expecting to receive all the help they need from the social services and no longer having any incentive to make their own efforts to emerge from their situation.

It can be seen that underlying these criticisms there is a social philosophy which it would not be appropriate to examine here explaining the origins and causes of poverty and having a particular view of the function of public services. It is as a result of these inclinations, this choice of values, that criticism of state intervention develops and the main arguments used to oppose further growth of public facilities are produced. The principal reservations concern the following aspects:

- excessive limitation of parental rights;
- weakening of individual responsibility;
- tendency to impose uniform conduct, sanctioning practices that do not conform to official norms;
- rigidity of services that run according to a stereotyped pattern that is difficult to change and is not well suited to different needs;
- creation of a cumbersome and costly bureaucracy.

c) Characteristics

Basically, the reductionist faction aims at at least two main goals:

- limiting the objectives of the Welfare State, the responsibilities of which have become so costly that the burden seems to become almost too much for the economy to bear in periods of crisis. This policy can be pursued more or less strictly, either by demanding a decrease in the real value of the social and educational budget, or by simply accepting that it remain constant in real terms. In either case both the administration and the professionals will be forced to re-examine their priorities, rethink the philosophy of the institutions, modify the organisation and operation of facilities, adopt new practices;

- safeguarding and revaluing the vitality of families. Protection of the family, defence of family integrity, opposition to government intrusion into family matters are recurrent themes amongst groups calling for more control over the activities of the State. While admitting the ambivalence of these concepts it must be acknowledged that they express a deeply felt desire shared by the vast majority of the population: to be free to live the family life they want.

According to several criticisms levelled at state policy, this aspiration has not been sufficiently appreciated and taken into account. Instead of adopting measures that would allow parents to fulfil their aspirations, investment in institutions has been preferred. Certainly for a considerable number of children and many parents, crèches, nursery schools, or even hospitals are better than the home, but this does not necessarily mean an adequate response to the population's aspirations.

These proposals and criticisms draw attention to the family's need for independence and the necessity of clarifying the motivations that inspire family members to stay together, to help one another, to be interdependent. The advocates of an austerity policy denounce administrative practices that run counter to this requirement, such as for example the condition applying in the United States for a long time whereby poor families had to show that the father was really away from home in order to be entitled to benefits, thus causing families to split up or to cheat. In 1972, the federal government, recognising the consequences of this state of affairs, modified the legislation so as to allow States to pay benefits even to families with both parents at home, but as of 1976 only half the States had availed themselves of this possibility (65).

Of course, it is likely that in general families of all social classes have sufficiently strong internal moral resources to be able to resist the forces that threaten them, but in certain circumstances the existence of families is certainly not encouraged. A critical analysis of the effects on family life of certain administrative norms and practices could be of use in revealing threats and administrative obstacles which complicate family life.

ii) Arguments in favour

a) Stricter control of expenditure

Objections to increased public expenditure in the social and educational sector are from very varied origins.

They may, for example, simply reflect the desire to balance the national budget by adopting various economy measures aimed at different sectors of public expenditure. The social sector, (and especially all the services concerning children which by their nature are investments that apparently do not show any immediate return) is a weak sector and constitutes a target that is fairly easy to hit.

Nevertheless, criticism can also come from groups very sensitive to social issues who object to very costly forms of intervention by the authorities that do not produce the expected results. In this case, opposition to indefinitely increased expenditure stems from uneasiness in the face of paucity of information about the results obtained. Few examinations have been carried out to see whether the users of services do in fact really receive the services that are supposed to exist since they are financed. and to what extent they benefit from them. By the same token, a thorough analysis of the appropriateness of services to local conditions and to individual needs is essential. It may be, for example, that crèches or child-minders would be the most appropriate solution for coping with urgent need for child care existing among families, but facilities of this kind are lacking, while other reception institutions (e.g. residential foster centres) which are more difficult to use, are available. This form of placement is not only more costly, but also represents a greater risk for the children, because it means separation from their families.

Finally, there is the extremely widespread opinion that in the past the main concern has been to invest, with the idea that an overall increase in expenditure was in itself a good thing, the success of the State's social policy being measured by the total funds allocated to it.

The changed economic situation has put an end to this attitude and encouraged analysis of the relationship "objectives-measures-effects" when evaluating services financed by the State, development plans, priorities adopted. However, the evaluation of programmes is not easy methodologically and the risk of possible manipulation, especially when an institution's subsidy depends on the results of the investigation, is well known. The body called upon to carry out the investigation will be disputed in some way or other, whether or not it belongs to the administration. The tendency now is to adopt the solution of proceeding to an examination of the users of services (in the first place, parents), this path allowing a better comparison of services and requirements. Nevertheless, it is not easy to implement this model either, because parents, too, are subject to a certain amount of conditioning. All the same, criticism levelled at the administration for not controlling expenditure has the virtue of drawing attention to the necessity of accounting more precisely for activities, which should at least lead to more efficient management of services.

b) Valorisation of the family

As we have just seen, the prominent theme in this approach is the self-sufficiency of the family. In general, those who are in favour of limiting the sphere of influence of public bodies consider that there are sufficient resources and interest within the family to be able to take care of the greater part of children's needs. This does not mean that families can manage without any help at all, or look after them themselves every day and take complete charge of their education. Children need to go outside the family, their education necessitates experiences and knowledge that the family is not always able to offer; but it is also known that within the family there exists a stock of competences, knowledge and motivations which could well be drawn upon, but has not been appropriately used in the majority of activities organised for children.

Certainly the success enjoyed by playgroups is a good demonstration of the interest of hypothesis and proof that parents are in fact not lacking in competence and initiative when it comes to organising worth-while experiences for children outside a complicated administrative framework. Furthermore, the reaction of several authorities in the United Kingdom, who have agreed to support these initiatives (for example by allowing them to use public facilities or subsidising them) is a sign that more flexible modes of operation really are possible. In other countries, rigid local authorities could have dismissed requests for help from playgroup leaders, using the more or less justified arguments of lack of formal guarantees regarding personnel, hygiene, civil liability, health, or they could have required compliance with the standards of safety and operation applied in the public services. Had they done so, they would have put the volunteer leaders in a difficult situation and many initiatives would have been compromised or prevented altogether. In other cases, initiatives and playgroups have flourished many times in spite of those requirements. On the other hand, by adopting a more flexible and accommodating attitude, they have given the forms of spontaneous solidarity that exist in the children's immediate environment the opportunity to strengthen and grow, with effects on the social and educational planes that should not be underestimated.

c) Precise objectives

A policy using limited resources tends to be less dispersive, to aim at a limited number of objectives. It should therefore be more explicit, hence more comprehensible - all of which should make it more controllable. A policy of expansion aims at several objectives, is more difficult to control and thus gives rise to alternative practices that deviate from the official line. One of the objectives of the reductionist approach is to avoid the appearance of these practices. It could therefore be said on this point than an inflexible policy is less ambiguous than an expansionist policy, because it is easier to see what it is aiming at. In fact, if it is to work, it has to exercise choices (stagnating supply, maintaining the status quo, modifying standards, seeking quality, selecting children) that can be clearly applied and controlled.

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Each choice implies the risk of conflict between the different groups concerned or violent argument about the objectives pursued.

In conclusion it can thus be said that the necessity of making choices:

- offers the advantage of simplification;
- permits the clarification of the overall mechanism and the forces at play;
- reduces the number of problems to be solved;
- increases the accuracy of the objectives to be attained ;
- increases, however, the risk of permanent conflict.

By contrast, the policy of expansion is more confused: the range of objectives is greater, the problems are not always clearly identified, the practices implemented are more contradictory. In a way it is an easier policy to pursue, not only because the available resources are greater, but also because there is more room for manoeuvre and it offers more possibility of satisfying a lot of people. The austerity policy is more difficult: in proposing choices it comes up against several obstacles, but it has the virtue of forcing both opponents and partners to think about the objectives, to recognise the problems and to analyse current and proposed practices. The question of efficiency is thus brought to the fore.

iii) Criticisms

a) The gaps remain

All analyses of public facilities for children show that the number of places available in the centres, the number of clinics, the network of nursery schools are all insufficient to meet the demand. Some facilities are used by a minority of children; but those whose families are taken in charge by the social services, and the supervision services in particular, make use of a wide range of resources. In other words, there are deficiencies and uneven distribution of services: the resources for developing the facilities desired by other social groups or which would be required in rural districts or the outskirts of large cities are lacking.

A freeze on expansion will do nothing to help this situation and there is a considerable risk of seeing inequalities in the distribution of services aggravated. Even maintenance of the status quo is not acceptable in itself, taking into account the extent of the unsatisfied demand. Redistributing expenditure within the budget, as we have seen, leads to no great hopes for a substantial change in the situation, especially if there should be a strengthening of the trend observed almost everywhere for the dominant social classes to take advantage of certain services originally conceived for working-class or poor families, as is the case with crèches. The result would be that the

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poor would have to continue to muddle through, either by using their own forms of mutual aid, or by resorting to private organisations, or by simply paying less attention to their children.

b) Discrimination

When investment is cut or increases are limited, one of the most usual reactions is to establish priorities for directing expenditure. A very common preliminary step is to formulate classifications (of families, of handicapped children, of needs, etc.) as an aid to more precise decision. (66) But developing more or less sophisticated systems of classification is not without its dangers. The first is that of putting labels on people. The second, a corollary of the first, is that specialist institutions are created that are reserved for certain categories, and the appropriate specialists for different types of needs are trained, with the result that children are classified according to the type of service they need. Crèches are for single or working mothers; the welfare services look after families under supervision or neglected children; the physically handicapped will be gathered into special centres, and similarly with the mentally retarded. The children end up by having their whole development conditioned by belonging to an institution.

These institutions, whose characteristics are well recognised, constitute closed, homogeneous environments that turn out a certain type of child following an ideal institutional model. As pointed out by Mozère:

> "The children who are cared for by these compartmentalised services gradually tend to be characterised by their 'membership' of one or another institution. This places the children in a kind of imposed 'typology' or 'classification' (which will therefore be imposed on their parents and those concerned with their care) and inserts them into a 'logical' stream, travelling along 'compulsory' channels, heading for a 'predictable' type of development." (Mozère, 1981, p. 116).

Children and families are shut into perfectly structured special environments, which they have to get to know in order to be able to adapt them, for any departure from the institutional norms could take on "pathological" significance. Now, this model of development becomes particularly attractive in a period of restraint, thanks to its apparent rationality: classification brings order to a confused and complicated situation and thus gives a clear picture of the position; specialised facilities allow individuals to receive specific care and thus give the impression of greater efficacy. Despite reduced resources it would then become possible to conduct a policy focused on disadvantaged or high-risk populations with adequate instruments.

c) Expansion of the private sector

Lack of growth in the public sector in a period of strong demand (and we have seen above that demand will remain high in the future also, especially regarding education) causes an increase in the private supply: day-care centres, crèches, nursery schools, play centres, children's recreation clubs, workshops of all sorts, run by private bodies or simply by individuals, are proliferating as we have witnessed over the past few years. Furthermore, not only services of an institutional nature are found in the private sector, services of a more personal nature, such as day-mothers, must also be included. This vitality in the private sector indirectly confirms the interest parents have in children's services, the needs existing in this sector, and the approval given to services capable of offering tailor-made services under certain circumstances, operating in a flexible way that the parents are more able to take advantage of.

But activity in the private sector also has a number of undesirable features to which attention must be drawn:

- An increasing number of initiatives aimed at children are run by commercial organisations which, thanks to their dynamism, are ousting non profit-making associations in certain fields, such as recreation and day care, especially in highly urbanised areas.
- Virtually all the private services have to be paid for, so, in this respect, the poor are disadvantaged. What is more, if they are not satisfied with a solution, more affluent families can try another, whereas poor families have much less choice open to them and often have to accept unsatisfactory solutions as being better than none. Further, the more affluent can use services even when there is no real necessity to do so, either to satisfy the children's wishes, or because they believe that in so doing they favour the children's development and education; in poor families, the need for care provisions is the dominating factor, the children's needs come far behind and can only be satisfied with difficulty or rarely. The idea of paying for the children to go out to play is strange to a large proportion of under-privileged families.
- The possibilities of controlling private services are restricted. Although the client has to pay, he sometimes has very little guarantee of the quality of care and activities, the standard of training and competence of the staff, the salubrity of the premises, the value of the facility. His only remedy if he is dissatisfied is to switch to another service or keep the children at home.

- In some countries the private sector is often specialised, focusing on certain specific situations: young single mothers, handicapped children, migrant children. Many factors contribute to causing this selective action, the result of which is that only a limited range of services is supplied.

Several measures have been examined or implemented by the authorities to try to counter these disadvantages, the main sufferers from which are the poorest families. The private sector also has made some attempt to organise itself so as to offer better guarantees to families (this is the case for example of associations of private institutions establishing common operating standards that all agree to respect), but it still remains virtually impossible to regulate a sector where non-institutional initiatives and private arrangements are very easily set up, escaping all control.

d) Less innovation

When the supply of funds is not increasing, room for innovatory manoeuvre is restricted and the whole system loses in vitality and creative impetus; the ability to respond to new requirements diminishes. Objectively, it is not possible to provide new structures, and subjectively the people concerned react by clinging to the old structures. The reproduction of the prevailing conditions and ways of working prevail over innovatory practices. This does not mean that the innovatory capacity of a growing system is automatically greater than that in a static system, but simply that flexibility of investment being greater, more resources are available to finance the establishment of new centres, experiment with alternative models, and try out different practices.

In these circumstances, a system where services do not evolve runs the risk of supplying facilities that are inadequate or outmoded with respect to social development or the needs of families.

In the preceding chapter we put forward the hypothesis that in the future there will be changes in the family's way of life and that in all social strata there will be increased awareness of children's educational needs, as the new image of infancy ("infancy as an occupation") materialises. The greater attention children will receive, and the increased time parents are able to devote to their offspring are both likely to modify the demands that families make on the services. Thus, crèches will no longer be able to limit themselves to looking after the little ones in reassuring hygienic conditions from morning to evening as was done in the majority of cases ten years ago. A service so conceived would no longer be attractive. Similarly, nursery schools will not be able to continue to operate on the basis of a rigid timetable, caring for the children when the parents could look after them themselves, or refusing to take them when the parents are busy (67).

These transformations, which are not only of a formal nature but concern the functioning of institutions, require modifications in staff training and are difficult to implement in periods of budgetary restraint, when experimentation is certainly not one of the priority concerns.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY ACTION

i) Description

The third approach is characterised by the central place occupied by innovation and experiment in the development of institutions for children. For the expansionist tendency, reproduction of facilities inspired by the same model is the general rule. Innovation and experimentation exist, but generally speaking they are encouraged within the context of special programmes that are run separately from the rest of the facilities.

For the non-expansionist tendency the place of innovation and experimentation is more controversial because of the general line followed, which requires the costs of the exercise to be met out of currently available resources. Interest in experimental programmes is therefore weakened, since it becomes difficult to justify their subsequent financing. Without the funds that would permit the findings of experimental activities to be exploited, their justification becomes a problem. There is therefore more readiness to cut back on experimental programmes than other activities should it become necessary to find additional resources somewhere to finance current operations.

a) Motivations

As regards this approach, it could be said that generally speaking it tries to combine the advantages of an expansionist policy with those of a non-expansionist policy in order to maintain the growth possibilities of public services dealing with children, while avoiding the development of programmes with high administrative costs.

However, it is not simply a question of implementing a policy of expansion without at the same time increasing investment, but rather of devising a different form of development and organisation of social policy for children, implying a variety of ways of administering and operating services. These innovations do not respond solely to a need for administrative reorganisation in order to make the public services more efficient, but are a manifestation of a different concept of social and educational action.

b) Objectives

The primary objective is to instigate non-normative transformational processes, by abandoning the imposition of uniform plans to be implemented in situations that are often very different from one another. In other words, the path to follow is that which leaves local authorities the freedom to take action as seems appropriate to them, accepting the differences that result from the variety of solutions that will be implemented as a result.

- Different distribution of power

As compared with the previous two approaches, this one is distinguished essentially by a different distribution of power. The remarks concerning the expansionist and non-expansionist models applied to a system where the organisation of policies for children was dictated by a central authority (which can operate at different levels) working through a complex administrative hierarchy.

The experimentational approach on the other hand postulates a decision-making model in which power is exercised mainly by the users and the representatives of the system with whom they have the closest contact, in particular the local authority, the staff of institutions and representatives of other bodies in the community who are interested in problems concerning the care and education of young children. Local bodies would not just be free to apply or interpret decisions taken at a higher level in the state organisation, juggling with subsidies and the sometimes very complex conditions attached to their allocation, but would be free to take any action that seemed appropriate to them, to plan the services they needed and establish whatever mode of operation and whatever regulations they thought fit.

The changeover from a "governed democracy" to a "governing democracy" (Burdeau, 1966) is a real shift in the decision-making centre and requires a transfer of power from the groups who had been almost the sole wielders of power up to now to groups who, although directly concerned with children through living with them, had remained in the background. It is thus easy to imagine that such a development will be far from easy and cannot come about without arousing lively resistance from the groups who have to give up positions they have held for a long time and that they only obtained after a bitter struggle. Their opposition to any change in the existing system could be very strong and manifest itself in several strategies aimed at maintaining the real balance of power unchanged, while accepting, if necessary, modifications in the formal relationships.

- Starting out from the practices of individuals and groups

The interest that community initiatives have aroused in certain circles during the past few years, irrespective of the successes or setbacks met with, bears witness to the existence of a certain uneasiness in the face of the currently prevailing models.

It is in fact a matter of developing an operational model for institutions in which there is an effective symbiosis between the institution and the community, children's centres no longer appearing as more or less closed places in which groups are cared for or educated by specialists, but rather as places, more or less institutionalised or structured, run by local groups of citizens (who might equally well be a parents' association or a trade union branch or a group of tenants).

Within the framework of this report it is not possible to identify and analyse the conditions permitting the establishment of these centres of initiative, to explain the causes for a considerable number of parents being interested in active participation in management in the context of the regulations currently in force or to find out whether there is a potential reserve of people available to take part in community projects. It should however be pointed out that people become passive and resigned when they cannot identify with the services that they use, when they are completely strange to them, when there is no sign that could allow some hope that by taking an active part they could come to have a real influence on the way institutions are run. The innovatory model proposes to reorientate the forms of intervention to take account of, and give maximum value to, family and local initiatives. The impression of being anonymous, of not counting for anything, of being more or less in the wrong, of being confronted by specialists and administrators who supply ready-made solutions "for the good of the children" and always have a ready response available leads to the appearance of negative reactions, lack of interest and passiveness that are often simply attempts to preserve some independence.

Those in favour of a different organisation of policies for children try to avoid the development and extension of structures that push users into a dependent relationship and try to instigate practices that make use of the totality of experience and of folk knowledge concerning children. This other policy

> "has its point of departure in the actual practice of people and groups and aims at a collective development of local micro-policies likely to generate reforms and readjustments in the relations between the subjects and the places in which they live and work" (Mozère, p. 126).

- Encouragement of experimentation

It is thus a question of implementing a pluralist policy characterised by a great variety of different initiatives. Such a policy is only conceivable if practical experiments are accepted and encouraged without attempting to direct, delimit and control them.

From this point of view it can be noted that in almost all countries there is no lack of experimentation (more or less programmed, and more or less known). In fact, despite the degree of development and the extent attained by the prevailing systems of education and social service activity, there are still some gaps that have allowed "unorthodox" activities to evolve. Furthermore, as we have already had occasion to mention, during the period of strong growth of the system a special effort was made in favour of experimentation with a view to testing new models or for assessing the importance of the effects produced by different practices or for any other objective.

In the first case, innovation appeared thanks to particular circumstances favouring initiatives by local groups able to find the resources and the will to get together to satisfy their own needs. The circumstances under which these practical experiments evolved are unique, but the very fact that the innovatory process was triggered off demonstrates the existence of creative abilities amongst children's immediate entourage.

In the second case experiment was fostered as a means to a more general end:

- to convince recalcitrant groups they should finance new programmes, the intrinsic worth of which had been demonstrated by appropriate experiments;
- to prevent the implementation of a certain policy by proving that the expected benefits are more imagined than real;
- to extend administrators' spheres of influence, since by encouraging experiments they receive the support of all the circles concerned;
- to prepare the generalisation of a reform, perfecting all the components of the model by testing them in several experiments.

It would be possible to find other applications of this principle and produce several examples for each case. The important point to stress here, however, is the mediatory function attributed to experimentation.

- Significance of experimentation

The philosophy of experimentation in the interventional approach assumes that:

- the transition from social experiment to social policy is possible merely by a generalising process;
- educational experiments can be transferred directly into educational policy;
- experiments can be reproduced indefinitely.

Starting off from particular circumstances, it is a question of producing models that can later be put forward for general application.

In this strategy, experiment appears as a means of developing principles to guide the pattern of social and educational reform. It would be most interesting to discuss this concept and the endeavours inspired by it, for it would reveal the obstacles that block the generalisation of experiments at different levels. This should lead to a better understanding of the conditioning factors that come into play and which need to be taken into account if a programme of reform based on the initial experiments is to be carried out.

The concept behind experimentation in the community movement is radically different. Within the framework of a differentiated expansion, experiment is no longer a means, but becomes an end. The innovative strategy aims at creating conditions that permit a multiplicity of practical experiments to be carried out without their being intended to serve as models for modifying a whole policy or for planning and launching a new one.

The innovatory policy is made for and by experiments that may live or die, reproduce or transform themselves, be similar or dissimilar, have the same or different goals. It does not propose a programme or plan worked out on the basis of experiments, but actually consists of experiments and manifests itself in a plurality of forms, ends and means.

The experiment is not conceived to create a prototype for later mass production, planned and directed by an overall policy. There will thus be a renunciation of the claim or the illusion that it is possible to make the transition from a limited experiment to generalisation of the approach, codified in administrative and regulatory forms in which the initial peculiarities and originality are inevitably lost.

c) Characteristics

To foster and reinforce interrelations between parents and children within the family, it is necessary at the very least to avoid foisting solutions they do not like upon parents and separating children from their family environment. To permit the full blossoming of each child's personality it is necessary to respect his rate of growth and reinforce his characteristics, affective attachments and cultural bonds.

For these reasons, centralisation has never enjoyed very great success in the field of policies for children, and communities have generally retained more responsibilities than in other branches of social policy. But in practice there are sizable obstacles to independence which considerably hamper local initiatives. The innovatory model is intended to encourage the initiatives of local bodies and especially to modify the prevailing administrative organisation so as to reduce these obstacles, in particular by studying the role of financing mechanisms and the changes that ought to be instituted in order to make them act as real incentives.

The scenario to develop in the future is the one in which children and families occupy the central position, and where the parties concerned are able to define their own requirements and the means of satisfying them.

ii) Arguments in favour

a) Social co-operation

In a situation where the users take the running of activities into

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their own hands, one of the first things to improve is the state of knowledge. Users know why a service exists, they understand the problems, they are confronted with questions of financing and day-to-day difficulties. This knowledge is an important creative factor. Furthermore, when needs arise under these circumstances, organisers and clients know that they have to count in the first place on their own energy, resources and ingenuity to deal with them. This results in a pooling of ideas and information that allows the capabilities and connections of members of the community to be exploited. The staff are not left to cope by themselves, and the parents, being informed about the problems that have to be resolved, cannot remain indifferent to what happens, as there is a risk of a deterioration in the quality of services to the disadvantage of their children.

In a situation in which parents and staff share the same values and preoccupations, collaboration and mutual help flourish more than under any other circumstances. Voluntary work to improve facilities, prepare activities, run services, has a real chance of developing.

The kinds of mutual help that appear in experiments of this nature are not purely of practical or economic interest, but are also of considerable educative significance. In fact, the children experience in a concrete fashion that there is continuity between the family and non-family milieux, that people having differing roles (parents and educators, for example) share the same values and leanings, and have common interests. This is a precondition for children's developing a sense of being members of a community and avoiding the growth of hostile feelings towards society and anything that is different from the family environment.

Furthermore, the staff too can help foster the development of these sentiments. Knowing the children's environment better and having a better understanding of their cultural milieu through working together with the parents and discussing problems with them, the practitioners can adapt their behaviour and create a working atmosphere that harmonizes with the children's everyday experience. Finally, it is the overall development of the children that benefits, because their education will take account of the totality of their experience and will not be addressed merely to individuals isolated from their context.

b) A less cumbersome administration

The size and complexity of the administrative apparatus controlling the social and educational system set up to attend to children have become so great that it is increasingly difficult to control and plan the whole of the activities. The splitting of responsibilities has created parallel administrative networks, each trying to become increasingly independent through enlarging its sphere of responsibilities, increasing the number of administrators, multiplying the number of grades. Finally, an ever greater share of the budget is swallowed up in bureaucratic activities.

The main problem that the expansionists have to resolve is stopping the administration from further encroachment without putting a brake on the development and improvement of services. Accepting a growth model based on the principle of non-directed experiment would probably enable this goal to be achieved. If the validity and interest of differentiated practices were recognised, it would no longer be necessary to work out standard development plans, to set up different committees to share the sectors of intervention between different administrative bodies, to produce new regulations, to set up a special body of administrators at every step, with its inevitable hierarchical structure and possibly with special training programmes. In the experimental system, questions of organisation being settled on the spot between parents, organisers, supporters of the idea, local authorities, there would be no need to create additional posts to standardize, control and finance the action undertaken.

In order to take advantage of knowledge acquired in experimental projects a co-ordinating network could be established to facilitate the circulation of information, some of the already existing administrators being used for this task. These last should furthermore draw on their own direct experience to help discover and develop the principles leading to the establishment of administrative practices that are compatible with the requirements of differentiated expansion. These considerations are not intended to give the impression that there will be a fall in the total number of people directly concerned with children, but simply to show the possibility of modifying the ratio of administrators to practitioners in favour of the latter.

c) Integrated solutions

We have seen in Chapter IV that the fragmentation of services is, in a sense, the administration's response to the complexity of social reality and the diversity of families. It has been attacked often enough, basically on two main grounds:

- the number of different programmes is so great that it ends up by appearing absurd and administratively insupportable. Several examples could be mentioned, but we shall cite only one here: federal child-health programmes in the United States. According to the Office of Child Health Affairs, the Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare offers 106 different programmes (Kahn et al., 1979). But looking at the situation from the point of view of children and families, the judgement cannot be so clear-cut. On the one hand, it can be reckoned that families have difficulty in knowing exactly what they need when faced by such a panoply of services and benefits, with the result that

some services are overburdened while others remain under-utilised. On the other hand, this abundance (or at any rate diversity) of services is reflected in the dispersed presence of specialists in the field to whom families can apply when in need. The families' requirements are not always arranged according to the classification grid used by the administration and what counts most for them in many cases is the presence of a public service that they can turn to in case of need, regardless of its particular specialisation.
It is also true that on the whole it is better to have a multiplicity of facilities rather than a scarcity, but it must be admitted that there is a risk of disequilibrium in supply here: many services for a limited section of the population, and (conversely) few services for a great many families (as is the case with crèches, for example).

- The multiplicity of programmes is expensive, and their co-ordination even more so, even though it is not really achieved. What is more, the investment of resources and energy required to co-ordinate programmes and initiatives does not necessarily guarantee improved quality of the services.

Finally, another danger of extending forms of intervention based on drawing up specialist programmes is the risk of weakening social solidarity. In the first place, the children taken in charge by services created for precise purposes (e.g. for children whose parents are alcoholics, violent, or drug-addicts; for problem children; for mentally retarded children) often remain socially stigmatised by the very fact that they were taken in charge by special services and consequently run the risk of becoming even more marginal than they were already. In the second place, the families comprising the "assisted" category become isolated from the local community, which no longer takes any interest in them, because there is no longer any need to worry about them, given that specialists are doing so. What is more, in this situation children and parents of marginal families often react with fatalistic behaviour, either as a means of self-defence, or a sign of complete surrender.

It cannot be said that community action is the remedy for all these ills, but it does offer the advantage of valorising the social dynamic, respecting the context, considering it as a system with capacity for self-regulation.

iii) Criticisms

Management problems

An economic assessment of this approach could give negative results in the sense that substantial savings are not to be expected. Expenditure would probably be no lower than it is today, but on the other hand a greater return and more efficiency could be expected.

However, the main weakness in a system that encourages community experimentation is in wasting resources and knowledge.

The autonomy of initiatives is not enough to neutralise certain types of administrative conflicts and problems. On the contrary, it might even be feared that the isolation of experiments could weaken the safeguards and increase still more the risk of pressures difficult to control. Thus for example, specialists finding themselves with the opportunity to "sell" their services directly could be tempted to influence those responsible for an experiment by urging them to prefer certain techniques over others.

Having a certain prestige by virtue of their training and the ease with which they handle scientific knowledge, specialists can take advantage of their powers of percuasion and their analytical abilities to impose the choice of the direction to be followed and the means to be adopted in the way that is most advantageous to them. Local groups, on the other hand, operate mainly with reference to empirical knowledge that enables them to make precise estimates of needs, but does not give them enough analytical power. Under these circumstances, lacking the particular evaluating instruments appropriate for judging the proposals put before them, they can easily be manipulated. Thus local elected representatives, parents, grass-roots organisations can become the object of direct competition between different professional groups and the specialists can defend their own interests more freely. We have given the example of the specialists here, but we could equally well have taken another group, such as builders or architects. Taking advantage of the good intentions of local authorities and the spirit motivating communities to promote the cause of children, it is relatively easy to force the choice of a project without a sufficient assessment of its quality or utility.

On the whole this approach does not offer sufficient guarantees against facile solutions or arbitrary manoeuvres.

Finally, we must avoid painting an unrealistic picture of local communities, forgetting that they are often the scene of serious conflict, or of confrontation between diverging views of society. If social solidarity exists within communities, there are also divisions which, in their turn, facilitate the power struggle of different interest groups. In order to avoid paralysis or experimental failures, negotiation procedures ought to be worked out to facilitate the search for solutions, the organisation of activities, the progress of projects, the resolution of problems.

Confronted with the practical difficulties, those taking part in experiments have to demonstrate a certain creativity, inventing specific measures adapted to particular cases and learning by doing. However, the stock of information that they accumulate and especially the many lessons learnt from all these procedures risk going to waste, at least in part, if they are not disseminated. This is another weakness in the experimental system, which can mean a waste of resources and knowledge.

While allowing the specificity of each experiment, it can nevertheless be recognised that many projects are similar and strive to resolve the same problems. Consequently, the educative value of each experiment would be greater if advantage could be taken of an analysis of the similarities and differences between the experiments. It would then be possible to avoid repeating the same mistakes, to try to profit by the originality of solutions put forward elsewhere and to forecast the results of certain measures.

It is therefore necessary to find a counterbalance to the move towards autonomy, a force sufficiently strong to play the role of liaison between different experiments, without becoming a hindrance to innovation.

However, establishing a structure of this type, limited to a role almost devoid of powers, poses a number of problems, as is shown by the setbacks encountered by many co-ordination projects. What is more, the practitioners immersed in practical problems not only feel uneasy about comparing themselves with others (often considering the events in their day-to-day experience to be unique) but having to devote part of their time to describing their present solutions. In short, they are reluctant to communicate their results, for this would oblige them, amongst other things, to step back somewhat from their experiments, with the risk of betraying their specificity. Finally, they are not always disposed to listen to what is being done elsewhere. Opposition to more open experimentation is at the same time a manifestation of distrust and of scepticism, a defensive reaction against conformity and the practices of past models.

b) Uneven distribution of services

Recognition of the principle of local authority autonomy in determining the services to be provided for children would give rise to less objections if the differences in development between communities were small, whereas they are often considerable. First, on the economic level there are rich and poor communities, and the former can afford to be much more ambitious than the latter in their projects. Then again, on the socio-occupational level there are some communities where people belonging to different social classes live side by side: businessmen, civil servants, members of the professions, educators, workers, scientists and intellectuals. In this case it is fairly easy to gather together the required competences, to find the appropriate procedures by drawing on people's knowledge and personal relations, and finally to assemble enough interested people to plan and run community services. By contrast, in other places the necessary competences may be lacking, information not arrive, material resources and time for attending to community projects not be available.

On the social level, too, places having a long tradition of community life are much more "productive" than others having, for example, a population mainly of migrants from different countries or a young and highly unsettled heterogenous make-up. Finally, there are also significant geographical differences: a rural community reacts differently from an urban one; in the suburbs, resources and motivations are not identical to those found in the central districts of a large city. The result is that certain communities are highly dynamic. Others, on the contrary, are passive: problems exist there, as elsewhere, but they are not resolved; no one is sufficiently motivated to react.

It also happens that some communities are inclined to adopt private arrangements when it is a matter of dealing with children, whereas others prefer to equip themselves with community services. Finally, some communities are paralysed by financial difficulties, whereas others, while disposing of considerable resources, do not feel it necessary to set up public facilities for children.

Given all these disparities, it is no use remaining passive and expecting regulating mechanisms to start operating automatically each time a disequilibrium between supply and demand appears, as if supply depended on demand.

Furthermore, local authorities' possibilities for action are limited. Several of the problems that concern children's lives are caused by factors outside their control, such as land speculation, the housing market, the organisation of work within the enterprise, regulation of the labour market or the creation of new productive activities. Similarly, communities do not have control over all the necessary operating instruments. For example they have virtually no chance of influencing programmes for children broadcast by the mass media; the training of specialists escapes them completely. In both cases it is necessary to develop regular contacts with the central bodies and the corresponding centres of power.

A system without any form of internal regulation operating through appropriate compensating or incentive mechanisms capable of stimulating and maintaining community action is just not acceptable. However, it will be noted that once again the main problem to be resolved remains that of the definition of the powers and means of this instrument of intervention which, in order to be effective, must neither be placed above community interests nor be totally subordinated to them.

c) Discontinuity

One of the major factors in the success of practical experiments and innovatory initiatives is the enthusiasm of their supporters, the commitment of practitioners, the collaboration of parents. Novelty is by nature an activating force, creating a spirit of solidarity, arousing the desire to act. Thanks to the enthusiasm of the supporters many difficulties are overcome relatively easily, often by means of original solutions. The obstacles appear less serious than usual and there is more willingness to co-operate than in routine periods.

The community action tries to exploit these "inspired" periods in which it is possible to carry out projects that otherwise appear almost inconceivable.

But there is a catch: this situation does not last indefinitely. Just as it appears in special circumstances, so there comes a moment when it disappears, and very often efforts to prolong it are in vain. The supporters get tired; internal crises break out dividing the practitioners; a routine becomes established enabling a small group to act in the name of everyone; parents change as their children grow older, and participation falls off. New parents arrive and inherit an established situation as if it were perfectly natural and do not themselves feel intimately concerned in the existence of the experiment. The relations they establish with the facilities they use are necessarily different from those of the founding group who experienced the cost of setting them up.

Generally speaking, the problem is to determine the conditions that allow all parents to become instigators of experiments and express their needs. The decline of human communication in the community network of industrial societies is such that one wonders how a good number of parents could be "brought into the picture" without their reaction being withdrawal, isolation, suspicion on account of the tactlessness of the professionals.

Thus, as experiments evolve, one has to look for some means of ensuring their continuation. The nature of the experiment will inevitably change, and activities will not be able to go on for ever in the same euphoric atmosphere, but ways must be found to keep them alive.

If such modifications are not introduced at the right moment, that is if care is not taken to make the administrative arrangements which, while crystallising the experiments, enable them to survive even without the presence of the initiators, the enterprise will die.

Care must be taken not to interpret this demise as a sign that the needs have disappeared or the experiment has ceased to function simply because it has become useless. This result, which is fairly common, is only evidence that the innovatory impetus is exhausted. If continuity is desired, then it is necessary to plan measures that will allow experimentation to be maintained. Once again, we arrive at the conclusion that the model based on autonomy demands in its turn the establishment of a regulatory principle capable of stimulating development and assuring equilibrium between different local contexts.

Such an authority controlling the equilibrium and operation of the system would not be a supreme managing body. Its function would be to define the guiding principles for political action and to ensure that in political and social action the universal criteria inspired by human rights, the rules of democracy and the objectivity of scientific knowledge are respected.

CONCLUSIONS

If it is admitted that policy for children covers the whole of the measures taken by society to improve children's lives and encourage their development and socialisation, when seeking the solutions to apply it is necessary to examine the situation of children in contemporary advanced industrial societies and the ways in which the systems set up for their benefit operate.

As regards children's status, it must first be emphasized that the disparity of situations and inequalities in the way of life tend to invalidate any judgement of a general nature. Nevertheless, it is possible to point out certain dominant features:

i) The historical process that has led to a new awareness of childhood is strengthening and becoming generalised in the sense that it is spreading to all socio-occupational categories. Family life is organised to an increasing extent around the children, whose importance keeps on growing. The privileged and central position accorded to children in contemporary social organisation (childhood as an organising principle) explains the interest and attention aroused by the problems of childhood.

ii) The considerable emotional investment directed towards children; (who have become rarer) is shown, among other things, in the extension of the educational function:

- it is no longer enough to look after and care for the children; they have to be educated. Spontaneity is no longer the fruit of the absence of supervision, but a basic organised principle of pre-school pedagogy;
- the types of education that were developed for middle-class children are spreading to the working class, as is demonstrated for example by the general success enjoyed by the theory of the educational game;
- starting off from the ever more widely accepted principle that the education of young children is a good thing, and that it should consequently be developed, we come to accord it a distinct specificity established by specialists in early childhood in order to produce practitioners;
- the popularity of parent education programmes fits into the same movement. The education of young children has become an essential activity that is specific and difficult to master, so that it has to be learnt; being a parent means exercising

a profession, that of educator. It is generally admitted that it is necessary to attend to children's education systematically and that parents, even if they are competent, are less and less able to assume this task completely themselves. Opinions such as these generate a growing demand for education in all social groups.

iii) Families' resistance to interference in the private sphere, their reaction against governmental dirigism, the attachment to the peculiarities in the household's way of life, non-acceptance of uniformity, all remain strong. Families fall back on themselves to defend their domestic realm which is one of the last remaining areas that they are free to run just as they wish. The increased importance of children, the priority accorded by young couples to family activities in their spare time, are the corollaries of this movement, an indication of the interest that families at all levels of society have in children. These aspirations and desires cannot be ignored, they are requirements that have to be considered and interpreted, being of undoubted influence on the organisation and 'functioning' of the activities of services.

iv) Changes taking place in the way working time is organised indicate that there will be more time available in the future that can be devoted to the home and family life. It is therefore probable that children will have more opportunity to be in the company of their parents and other members of the family, all the more so because the pattern of the whole life cycle is going to change. There will be more relatively young retired grandparents, more married children not yet participating full-time in the work force, but already having children of their own. In this situation, the care and welfare functions will diminish in importance, while the educative and affective functions of the couple for their own children will become paramount.

All these transformations reflect the changed social role of the child (who is rarer, but more important, more representative of the situation of couples, the object of more attention. more care, greater emotional investment than in the past) and lead us to expect that families will develop other forms of looking after children that will be expressed in an intensification of educative action.

Nevertheless, we must not let these observations delude us into thinking that children's conditions of life in advanced industrial societies are more idyllic than they really are. In fact, despite this trend which is apparently to the benefit of children, there are circumstances peculiar to the development of these societies (which have been exposed and documented in a whole series of studies) that are far from being favourable to children. But the most important thing, as has already been pointed out, is to be wary of generalisations and not to suppose that the trends mentioned above will apply to all children.

Quite the contrary, there will remain great inequalities regarding the satisfaction of a number of basic requirements such as hygiene, access to the care system, diet, living conditions, quality of the urban environment. It suffices just to recall the variations observed in infant mortality according to the socio-occupational category of the head of the household, or regional disparities in the network of educational and public health facilities.

Finally, even where the overall situation of children may appear satisfactory, it has to be realised that there is still a considerable number who are disadvantaged or distressed. So much remains to be done to reach even the minimum goal of guaranteeing all children appropriate conditions for their development.

As to education, it is difficult to say at this stage whether the observed trends improve children's educational chances or present certain risks for their socialisation. It can be assumed that the demand for education will not fall off, but it is not certain that parents will be able, or want, to take an active role. There are certainly signs pointing in this direction, but there is also counter-evidence indicating the possibility of delegation of the greater part of educational responsibility to specialists.

As regards the operation of the ECCE system (i.e. public and private facilities for children taken as a whole) and development policy strategies, two conclusions seem to stand out fairly clearly from the mass of observations:

1. All systems are growing strongly and for this reason are characterised by considerable dynamism. Their vitality is shown among other things by the multiplicity of conflicts running through them and the complexity and fragmentation of the services offered. In these circumstances, the postulates of rationalising and simplifying the system have inspired a considerable reform movement aiming to secure greater co-ordination or even integration of services. However, co-ordination of the administration is difficult to achieve, if not impossible. It apparently runs counter to the growth movement. Its implementation requires considerable resources and swallows up large sums of money that are out of all proportion to the results obtained, which are often far below expectations. Despite these setbacks, reforming the organisation through co-ordination remains a very attractive idea. The fact is that co-ordination can be presented as an end in itself although it is really only a reorganisation model, which means that it can be used to achieve other ends. The succession of co-ordination projects put forward throughout the history of services for children is further proof of

the difficulty of controlling an expanding system, which leads one to expect that the idea will cease to be so popular once expansion has stopped.

2. Most public pre-school services are only aimed at a limited section of the infant population, with the possible exception of some medical services and nursery schools in certain countries. This being so, it might be supposed that access to services or entitlement to benefits would be reserved to certain well-defined categories, notably disadvantaged children and the poor. But such is not the case. Respecting the principle of priority for the disadvantaged where supply is insufficient to meet demand is always difficult, and in any case the principle is very questionable from the social point of view, given the considerable risk of aggravating discrimination. Moreover, in practice, the special programmes were not always brilliantly successful. It is therefore proposed that public services should be expanded to cover all children of pre-school age, so as to be able to provide for their fundamental requirements as regards care, health and education. A general coverage of this sort could at the same time satisfy demand, avoid the perverse effects noted in a deficiency situation and, finally, better guarantee the principle of equal opportunity for all children.

It would appear difficult to propose and implement a policy conceived on these lines at present time, because of restrictions for the expansion of national initiatives and the intrinsic limitations of the Welfare State. In any case, it is not by means of public institutionalisation of the whole range of services for children that inequalities will be corrected or the community's attitudes towards children modified. It should not be taken from these remarks that the State has nothing to do in this field, or that its commitment ought to be cut back to the necessary minimum. Similarly, it would be wrong to draw pessimistic conclusions about the chances of improving the existing system of services, and consequently say it would be better to leave it alone. As we have just seen, there still remain important needs that cannot be satisfied by the resources of the family left to itself. In any case, a child's socialisation cannot develop entirely within the household. The difficulties encountered when attempting to reform the organisation of the distribution and operation of services, as well as the disadvantages of generalised widespread state institutionalisation of these services, suggest that the solution is not to be sought in implementing a global policy for children under the aegis of the State, worked out on the basis of universally applicable norms and standards imposed through centralised planning and intervention.

Instead, a way should be sought that tends to foster solidarity between families, stop the children being confined all day long within a protected space, and reduce recourse to specialists to whom the children are entrusted. This approach should aim at promoting community experiments, creating initiatives within organisations, encouraging the development of community projects for children conceived for the specific needs of the local children.

For these reasons, the scenario of widespread experimentation described in the final chapter is obviously of interest, provided that provision is made for some correctives. This type of approach answers the needs and expectations of the population better and makes the most of the available resources. It means giving up grandiose political plans standardising services over the whole country and accepting the existence of a range of facilities different in form, organisation and mode of operation. This approach combines two objectives that are often difficult to reconcile: expansion and differentiation. In future, only models of development that respect this twofold requirement will be conceivable: expansion must continue, given the insufficiencies; differentiation is necessary to counter the defects in the present situation and ensure the quality of services which depends in the first place on the flexibility of the supply and its being adapted to requirements.

The exploration, implementation and perfection of an organisational model inspired by ecological considerations is the path that ought to be followed in order to adapt policies for children to the social and economic changes currently taking place.

NOTES TO CHAPTERS

Chapter I

1) An analysis of the most striking changes in the social and economic context affecting the environment of children has been made by J. Tizard, P. Moss, J. Perry: All our Children. Pre-school services in a changing society. Temple Smith/New Society, London, 1976.

2) Project "Gezin en Familie" (Project Director M.J. van Doorn-Janssen). Report published by the University of Utrecht, 1971.

3) L. Roussel (1976) mentions the studies by Sussman M.B. Burchinall: "Kin family network: heralded structure in current conceptualisations of family functioning" in: Marriage and Family Living, August 1962, pp. 231-240; "Parental aid to married children: implications for family functioning" in: Marriage and Family Living, November 1962.

4) P. de Sandre (1976): "Critical study of population policies in Europe". Document presented at the Council of Europe Seminar on the Implications of a Stationary or Declining Population in Europe, Strasbourg, 6-10 September, 1976. Document SEM/PS(76)7.

5) P. de Sandre, ibid. A thorough analysis of reproductive behaviour has been made by M. Bassano, J. Kellerhals: Familles urbaines et fécondité. Georg Librairie de l'Université, Genève, 1975. The authors bring to light the numerous factors, especially of a subjective nature, that influence fertility levels, stressing the contradictions to which couples are subject in present-day society and, in so doing, underlining the limitations of policies implemented hitherto concerning the birth rate.

6) Especially in France, where several politicians have come out publicly in favour of a more energetic family policy. See, for example, the article by M. Debré: "Ce jour que j'attendais...", Le Monde, 12.8.78, No. 10430.

7) In certain regions, there was already a high percentage of the population who could read and write long before the introduction of compulsory education. Thus in Paris in 1847, 84.2 per cent of the workers were literate (79 per cent of the women, 87 per cent of the men). In 1860 the percentage of all workers who could read and write was 87 per cent and there was no longer any difference in this regard between men and women.
(A. Cottereau: "Méconnue, la vie des enfants d'ouvriers au XIXème siècle" in: Autrement, No. 10, 1977.

8) To cite only the case of Greece, according to the 1971 census data, 9.3 per cent of the total population in the 20-24 age bracket is illiterate, but "a fifth of the female population of the country is illiterate and one third of the women in rural areas. Of every three persons who have not completed compulsory schooling, two are women". (M. Eliou, "La distribution des chances scolaires en Grèce". Duplicated document presented at the Athens International Symposium on the Child in the World of Tomorrow, 2-8 July 1978).

9) Cf. the summary report by Noëlle Gerome on the topic "Production and dissemination of knowledge about childhood". C. Boltanski, in "Prime éducation et morale de classe", Mouton, Paris, 1969, examines

the process which led to the constitution of a body of knowledge about the care to be given to the new-born, to the structuring of this knowledge into a new discipline to be taught, child-care, and the modes of dissemination as well as the transmission problems met with among the public who should be particularly concerned, working-class women.

10) Cf. the article by A. Cottereau, already cited in note 7. On this subject the author states: "The gradual suppression of gainful employment below the age of 12 and compulsory schooling ... retarded the experience of the struggle for survival and confined the child's dependence within the parents' family. In this sense, the infantilisation of working-class children followed, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the infantilisation of bourgeois children, but with a century's delay."

"It is not, however, simply a matter of levelling, of just coming into line with a dominant model. The confinement of dependence to the family during school age creates new attitudes peculiar to the working class milieu. The child becomes more of a burden and family affection does not efface a reality of which everyone, parents and children, is conscious. On the contrary, the conditions for new tensions are created. Previously the child was accustomed to spreading his affections and finding his models outside the family circle, his nurses, teachers, comrades and his protectors at work. From now on, he is denied this extension." (op. cit., p. 132).

11) Boltanski (op. cit., note 9) speaks of a vast and ambitious programme, aiming to "regulate life, particularly that of members of the lower classes, regulate all activities, including the most intimate, that take place in the heart of the household".

12) Roussel (op. cit., note 3) (page 127) observes in his research that education is one of the subjects most frequently avoided in conversation between parents and children.

13) John A. Butler, E. Baxter: "Current Structure of the Health Care Delivery System for Children", mimeo.

14) Comparison with the past is problematic following the difficulty in finding criteria of common classification and of the modification of research instruments. It is plausible that the range of handicaps has widened and differentiated and that the social and technical evolution creates in turn new handicaps (e.g. dyslexia, which is linked to schooling and to the elimination of illiteracy).

15) In Germany, in 1974, there were 52,000 handicapped children between 0 and 6 and 358,000 handicapped children and young people under 16, which means that about 3 per cent of all families in Germany have a handicapped child. (German document for ECCE Project).

16) The Conference held at Wolfsberg (Switzerland) from 27 June to 3 July 1976 was organised by the Free International Association for the Promotion of Social Policies for Children.

17) "The Child in Contemporary Society". Notes of the First Wolfsberg Conference. Wolfsberg, Bulletin Number One, May 1977.

18) This subject was studied as one of the activities of the Working Party on the Role of Women in the Economy. See: Women and Employment: Policies for Equal Opportunities, Paris, OECD, 1980.

19) This does not seem to be completely true of all countries, notably the Netherlands, if the remarks made by E. Singer (1981) are taken into account.

20) Handbook of Labor Statistics 1977, Bulletin 1966, B.L.S., Washington D.C.

21) Bundesminister für Jugend, Familie and Gesundheit (1975): *Zweiter Familienbericht*, Bonn, p. 96. The report mentions among other things a series of research projects on the connections between housing conditions and success at school, juvenile delinquency and infant mortality.

Chapter II

22) For example, the evaluation by Westinghouse (1963-69).

23) "A Review of Head Start Research since 1969 and Annotated Bibliography", prepared by Ada Jo Mann, A. Harrell, M. Hurt Jr., Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington D.C., 1977.

24) Lois-Ellen Datta: "Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education: A Perspective from the United States", 1973. (mimeo).

25) *Federal Programs for Young Children*: *Review and Recommendations*, HEW, Washington D.C., 1973, Vol. 4.

One could also usefully refer to the work of U. Bronfenbrenner; *Is early intervention effective?* *A report on longitudinal evaluations of pre-school programs*. HEW, Washington D.C., 1973.

26) For example, Susan Gray's "Early Training Project" (Murphysboro, Tennessee), D. Weikart's "Perry Pre-school Project" (Ypsilanti, Michigan) and Martin and Cynthia Deutsch's "Institute for Development Studies" (New York City) were all launched at about the same time in 1962.

27) Council of Europe: Educational Research Symposium on the Social-Culturally Handicapped, Ghent, September 1973.

28) *Recherches sur les handicaps socio-culturels de 0 à 7-8 ans*. Direction générale de l'organisation des études. Ministère de l'Education nationale et de la Culture française, Bruxelles, 1973.

29) Ministère de l'Education nationale: *Scolarisation en maternelle et scolarité primaire*. Le cas de l'arrondissement de Valenciennes, CRDP, Lille, 1975.

30) Source: L'école maternelle et l'égalité des chances" Séminaire de l'ENA: *Etudes et documents* 77.2.

31) Valenciennes (*op. cit*. in note 2a), page 7.

32) *Recherches pédagogiques*, No. 68: "Pourquoi les échecs scolaires dans les premières années de la scolarité?" INRP, Paris, 1974.

33) Fixing a rate of progress is connected with the use of a particular kind of growth model. It is therefore important to know the type of model that is being used. On this subject see: T.G.R. Bower: *Pathways in Development*, OECD, CERI, Paris, 1977.

34) See for example the catalogue of studies examined by Ch. M. Heinicke et L.H. Strassmann: *The effects of day care of pre-schoolers and the provision of support services for day care families*, HEW, Washington D.C., Ch. Mermillod: "Le développement de l'enfant à 4 ans est-il significatif des modes de garde antérieurs?" in: *Bulletin de statistiques "Santé-Sécurité Sociale"*, No. 2, Paris 1974.

Chapter III

35) An excellent example is provided by the controversy that arose out of the research report on American federal policy for pre-school services drawn up by the Stanford Research Institute for the Washington Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Stanford Research Institute: Federal Policy for Pre-school Services: assumptions and evidence, May 1975, prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education, DHEW, Washington, D.C.). The National Council of Organisations for Children and Youth (NCOCY) having made a series of fundamental criticisms of this report, the Institute that had drawn it up was invited to reply, which was done in a document (Response to questions about Federal Policy for Pre-School Services, July 1976) which presents opposing opinions on several points concerning policies for children.

36) Contribution to the panel organised during the second meeting of National Delegates participating in the Early Childhood Project held in Paris, 6-8 September 1978.

37) According to M. Rein: *Social Policy*. Random House: New York, 1970.

38) "To make individuals at all economic levels and in all parts of society capable of solving their problems requires the creation of a broad system of supports for the family. Such a system would be based on new national policies, but would depend for its implementation on the efforts of state or local governments as well as institutions in the private sector." A little later, more explicitly: "... the popular categorical programs have limited success, and large populations in need of basic services continue to be deprived". (In: *Towards a National Policy for Children and Families*, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 92-93).

39) For example J. Tizard at the panel organised during the Second Meeting of National Delegates of the Early Childhood Project held in Paris, 6-8 September 1978.

40) One might therefore be tempted to say that development has taken place at the expense of children. But this would be to jump to an erroneous conclusion through ignorance of children's living conditions, class differences and the demands of each household. For many children, attending a nursery school class, even less than ideal, is a benefit and an advance.

41) There are so many studies that even a brief bibliography fills several pages. The following are some examples:

A Day Care Guide for Administrators, Teachers and Parents, by Richard Ruopp, Brigid O'Farrell, David Warner, Mary Rowe and Ruth Freedman, MIT Press, 1973; *Publicly Funded Day Care in Maryland*, by Abt Associates (Richard Ruopp and Donna Warner), Abt Publications, 1974; *National Day Care Study*, prepared for HEW by Abt Associates; *Sliding Fee Schedules - A Simulation Analysis of Child Care Service and Cost under Welfare Reform*, prepared for CCD by Abt Associates, 1972; *Fichier coûts des équipements collectifs* - *Les crèches*, Ministère de l'Equipement, Plan Construction, Ministère de l'Intérieur. La Documentation française.

42) A preliminary proposal of research is described by Psacharopoulos in his analysis of economics of early childhood services (see Annex).

43) Dan Sharpe, economist at the Thomas Coram Unit Research; comments attached to the Gustafssons' paper.

44) See for example Mario Rosa Dalla Costa, S. James, 1973: "Le pouvoir des femmes et la subversion sociale" Librairie Alteracher, Genève, or Elly Singer (1981).

45) It would be interesting not merely to note this situation, but to go and interpret it. In fact the relative autonomy of communities which admittedly reflects an apparent respect of family prerogatives as regards children) is coexistent with many kinds of interference with the family and parents and justified on grounds of the national social policy.

46) ENA seminar: L'école maternelle et l'égalité des chances. Etudes et documents, Paris, 1977, page 28. These data are confirmed in the IAURP study on the costs of setting up the collective crèches opened between 1964 and 1976. See also GEDREM (1978): Accueillir la petite enfance, Syros, Paris, where ECCE financing procedures in France are also analysed.

47) Ohio Children's Budget Project: "A public policy study", Council for Ohio Schools Letter 3, 1976.

48) Childcare and Pre-school: Options for Federal Support, Background paper. Congress of the United States. Congressional Budget Office, Washington D.C., 1978.

49) Ohio Children's Budget Project, op. cit.

50) Estimations of GRAPE (Groupe de recherche et d'action pour la petite enfance) in 1977.

51) For example, the children/staff ratio is as follows:

Ratio for all centres - 6.8:1
Ratio for all centres subsidised by federal programmes - 5.9:1
Ratio for all centres not subsidised by federal programmes - 7-6:1
Federal agency norm for crèches - 6.4:1
Average ratio for state crèches - 12.4:1

52) Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office: Childcare and Pre-school; Options for Federal Support, September 1978.

53) E. Loperfido, in charge of public health in the Bologna city council, quoted by T. Aymone and M. G. Caccialupi: "Crèches et participation" - Research into some public crèches in Bologna, mimeo, undated.

54) A certain number of national experiments as well as numerous American programmes are intented to improve parental aptitudes. Examples are the Parent-Child Development Centres and the Ypsilanti-Carnegie Infant Education Project, the primary objective of which was to turn the mother into a teacher.

55) We take up here the principal features of historical development in England and the United States as sketched by M. Rein in Social Policy, pp. 109 et seq.

Chapter IV

56) These surveys are one of the richest sources of information on families of the past as can be seen from the analysis of the survey organised by the government of Florence in 1427. Chr. Klapisch: "Household and Family in Tuscany in 1427", in: Household and Family in Past Time, edited by Peter Laslett, Cambridge University Press, London, 1972.

57) For example, in the United States in the financial year 1976, the federal administration subsidised 1,403 research projects focused exclusively on children under nine (early childhood being defined as the period extending from the prenatal phase to the ninth year).

If projects that cover children of nine and over are also considered, the total rises to 3,277 projects for a total expenditure of $379.5 million (see for example: "Toward Interagency Co-ordination: FY '76 Federal Research and Development on Early Childhood". Sixth Annual Report prepared by the Social Research Group of the George Washington University, 1977).

58) Extracts from the communication to the panel at the meeting of national delegates held at the OECD, Paris, 6-8 September 1978.

Chapter V

59) A major factor to be considered alongside a reduction in working hours is a serious increase in travelling time. If this is taken into account, the overall working time in many cases has increased rather than lessened.

60) A proposal for critical analysis is developed by Christian Lalive d'Epinay Etienne Christe et Michel Bassand: "Structure sociale et système de loisirs", Revue suisse Sociologique N° 3, 1978, pp. 139-1[illegible].

61) P. Hunziker analyses trends in social relations within households resulting from new mixes of work and non-work time in "Familie und Oekonomische Umwelt", doctoral thesis, Constance, October 1978 (mimeographed).

62) Bundesminister für Jugend; Familie und Gesundheit: Zweiter Familienbericht, Bonn, 1975.

63) Sar A. Levitan and R.S. Belors estimate that the negligible variation of working hours in the United States following the Second World War is the result of a calculated choice in this respect:

"One explanation centres on the unleashing of a pent-up demand for consumer goods and services after the Great Depression and World War II. Increasing wages to finance these voracious consumption demands became the first priority, and reducing the workweek was placed on the back burner. Birth rates, which were very low during the 1930s, sky-rocketed with the end of the war and renewed prosperity. Not only were there more children to feed, clothe, and house; this generation of parents was determined to give their children 'all the good things' they never had. This included hefty doses of added education and health care, whose costs continued to mount as demand rose. With the number of children increasing and the child rearing costs per young one edging up, boosting income continued to be the first concern."

Shorters Hours, Shorter Weeks. Spreading the Work to Reduce Unemployment. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1977.

64) The 150 hour experiment is a form of paid study leave introduced into collective agreements in the steel industry and a few other sectors in 1973 and later applied to other sectors with the aim of: allowing people to complete their compulsory schooling and obtain the appropriate certificate (end of first cycle of secondary education); and organising university education in the form of specialist seminars.

Between 1973 and 1978 about 300,000 workers took part in these courses. During this period the number of women more than doubled:

	1974	1976	1977
Men	84.1	66.0	61.9
Women	15.3	32.6	36.4

__Source__: CENSIS.

In the choice of subjects the important place of topics close to education can be seen:

	1974	1976	1977
Social environment	54.6	28.7	26.4
Family problems	12.8	12.1	14.5

Chapter VI

65) __Public Assistance Statistics, June 1976__. SRS, National Centre for Social Statistics.

66) On this subject the work of N. Hobbs of Vanderbilt University (United States) on classification systems should be mentioned.

67) The fact that the hours during which children's centres operate are not the same as parents' working hours can put the children into strange situations. Cases are known where children are minded by two or three different people every day: in the morning before school opens; at midday if there is no school canteen; in the afternoon between the time school finishes and when the parents get home.

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Annex

THE ECONOMICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND SOME EMPIRICAL DIMENSIONS

by

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George Psacharopoulos

ABSTRACT

Two kinds of pre-school institutions are distinguished depending on the age of the child and whether some form of instruction is provided: crèches (approximate age group 0-3) and kindergartens (3-5). Each type of institution has different costs and yields a different stream of social benefits.

On the basis of very limited information crèches appear to be very expensive relative to other forms of pre-school services. By the same token it is very difficult to arrive at an estimate of the social value of the crèche to the working mother, let alone the substitutability between family and institutional inputs in early child development.

Kindergartens appear to be cheap relative to formal school classes at the elementary level. However, it is very difficult to project their beneficial effect over time because K (= kindergarten) is a missing variable in sociological path analysis. One piece of evidence that can be established with certainty is that the correlation between early and late ability is on the high side, although the "ability" in question often refers to the limited IQ measure.

Pre-school services have drastically increased over the last decade and are mainly financed by private means. Yet Western societies differ drastically regarding the shape of the base of the educational pyramid. Observations as these raise issues of the optimal level of services for children and the finance of the associated cost. One particular policy issue is that of lowering the compulsory education starting age. These issues can be answered only on the basis of an interdisciplinary social calculus that is missing from the literature. A limited number of research areas are identified in order to increase our understanding on this frontier.

I

INTRODUCTION

What are the resources used for the welfare of young children in contemporary Western societies? Is the level of expenditure on such activities as crèches and kindergartens socially optimal? What is the concept of optimality in this particular area? What does society get back per unit of expenditure on specific child services provision? How is the total resource expenditure on children financed in different countries?

These are examples of questions one should ask under the heading of the economics of social services for young children. The aim of this report is to attempt to survey these issues from the theoretical and empirical point of view. However, it should be mentioned at the outset that the treatment of the topic is extremely global. The global treatment is at the same time intentional and also stems from necessity. The intention comes from the fact that the theme has so many diverse dimensions that a comprehensive treatment at aggregate level is long overdue. The necessity comes from the very scanty existing empirical evidence that relates to the issues discussed. To put it bluntly, national statistical collection procedures are more geared towards documenting the value of imports, exports and beer consumption, rather than what is spent on children, let alone what this expenditure brings back to society as a whole.

Beyond this introduction the paper is divided into four sections. Section II provides a taxonomy of the many analytical considerations one has to take into account in order to meaningfully discuss any particular issue in this elusive area of social activity. Section III attempts to put some empirical flesh to the theoretical discussion by assembling bits and pieces of scattered statistical material on the cost of services for children. Section IV presents even thinner evidence on the benefits side. The final section contains a list of five research areas that, in my opinion, should receive priority in the years to come.

II

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The subject matter of social services for children cuts by nature across many disciplines. To mention a few, medicine, sociology, educational psychology, demography and economics are all major fields contributing to our understanding of early childhood policy issues. Although the main analytical vein in this paper is economic, tribute is paid to the fact it has to be supplemented by more in-depth treatments from other disciplines as those mentioned above.

THE EXISTING LITERATURE

Over the last decade, economists have increasingly addressed themselves to children. The starting point was the new economics of the family, stemming from a seminal article by Gary Becker on household production and the value of time. (1) Economic research in this area took several directions, like explaining the quantity of children, the determinants of child quality, the issue whether children are investment or consumption goods and several others. (2)

One particular area of past economic research relating to "children" (broadly defined) is the economics of education. The literature is extremely rich on the extent to which educational expenditures are an investment and what is the social and private profitability of this investment. Yet a scan of Blaug's recent edition of an annotated bibliography in this field reveals that out of the 2000 items listed not much refers to the economics of pre-primary education. (3)

NARROWING DOWN THE FIELD

The field of social services to children is so vast that it needs some narrowing down for operational purposes. There exist two dimensions

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1) G. Becker, "A theory of the allocation of time", Economic Journal, September 1965.

2) For a collection of essays in this spirit, see T.W. Schultz, ed., Economics of the Family, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1974.

3) See M. Blaug, Economics of Education: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, Third Edition, Pergamon Press, 1978.

Figure 1

THE RANGE OF SERVICES TO YOUNG CHILDREN

	Direct services to children		Child supportive services to parents	
	"Well" child	"Ill" child	"Well" child	"Ill" child
Health	- Pre/postnatal care - Preventive: physical exam, nutrition, psychological exam	- Remediation of physical/mental illness, disability	- Training in simple early prevention/ diagnosis, treatment and/or referral; diet improvement; parenting skills - Pre/postnatal parental leave	- Training in home nursing skills - Work release for ill children
Welfare	- Child centered community recreation - Day care - Special summer camps	- Adoption - Foster care - Direct short term response to neglect, abuse, exploitation	- Training and referral to community support systems - Income support - Housing improvement - Employment services - Personal counseling	
Education	- Pre-school educational programmes	- Special aid for handicapped/ retarded children	- Parent-as-pre-school teacher	- Special training for parents of handicapped/ retarded children

Source: Richard R. Ruopp, "A study of public/private resource distribution for services to young children", OECD/CERI, 1978, document (mimeo).

here; who are the "children", and what are the "services" to them?

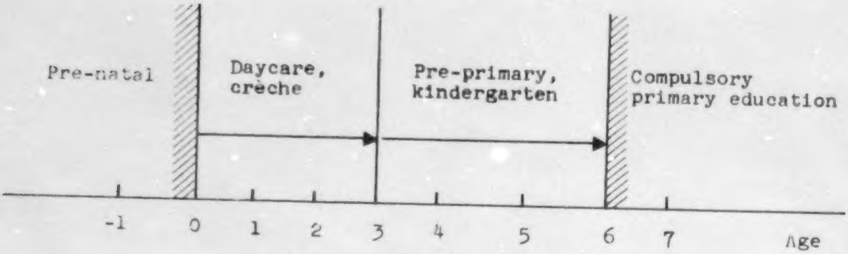
Children for the purpose of this discussion are those aged between 0 and before entry to the compulsory cycle of primary education (i.e. 5 to 7, in most countries). This definition automatically excludes family planning, pregnancy and related medical issues. (1) It also excludes the ages for which we know a lot on the costs and benefits of social provision, i.e. after children enter primary school.

There are many social services for children, e.g. direct and indirect health, welfare and education services to "well" and "ill" children under the age of, say, 6 (Figure 1).

The present study is focused only on direct services for children in the field of welfare and education, namely the provision of day-care facilities for the very young and some kind of formal instruction to pre-school age children (Figure 2).

Figure 2

THE TWO TYPES OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN CONSIDERED IN THIS REPORT



THE POLICY ISSUES

But what are the policy issues regarding the provision of these services to young children? These could be classified under two headings:

a) Social efficiency issues and

b) equity, opportunity or income distribution issues.

The first class of issues imply a resource allocation question. Is too much or too little currently spent on nursery schools? Should the capacity of crèches be increased in a given country? What is the social profitability of expenditure on daycare facilities?

The second class of issues is addressed to the private versus social payment for a given service, e.g. what kind of parent (e.g. rich/poor) uses what kind of facility? Or how is the full cost of a given social provision for children financed out of the general taxpayers' money and how much by parental contributions?

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1) This arbitrary dividing line is of course a value judgement and open to debate.

These questions imply both normative value judgements and positive analytical pieces. Services for children as those described above entail the use of resources that could be used on something else, say, crime prevention. Given the fact that different sectors in the economy compete for the use of limited resources, how do services for young children compare with other services? Should one aim for a 100 per cent crèche and kindergarten coverage? If not, why and to what percentage?

A comparison might be drawn at this point from primary education: its quantitative provision has ceased to be a policy issue in advanced countries where it is constitutionally assumed that a 100 per cent enrolment ratio is the norm. But of course there exist differences between countries in the quality of education provided and thus qualitative improvements are a policy issue. As we shall see in the following section, there exist wide differences in kindergarten enrolment ratios between advanced countries and therefore both quantity and quality are policy issues at the pre-primary stage.

LOSLA VERSUS ROSLA

Another interesting analogy can be drawn by comparing the social welfare effects of ROSLA (Raising of the School-Leaving Age) to what we shall name LOSLA (Lowering of the School-Entry Age). (1) After World War II many European countries have instituted ROSLA (e.g. England in 1947 and 1972, Portugal and Greece) and we seem to know a lot about its economic effects. (2) Extending compulsory schooling backwards, however, is rather novel (cf. discussions in France, the Netherlands and Finland) and to the best of my knowledge no literature exists on the economic effects of LOSLA. Clearly, one cannot extrapolate the effects of ROSLA backwards, because of the age difference involved (see Figure 3). In the first place there must be cost differences between the provision of educational facilities to, say, 7 year-olds and 3 year-olds. Second, and perhaps more important, there must be differential diffusion effects of the resulting benefits. For example, the early childhood educational benefits might disappear a few years after entry to the compulsory primary cycle, whereas the effects of ROSLA might be lasting over a lifetime.

But let us have a closer look at the costs and benefits related to the provision of early childhood social services.

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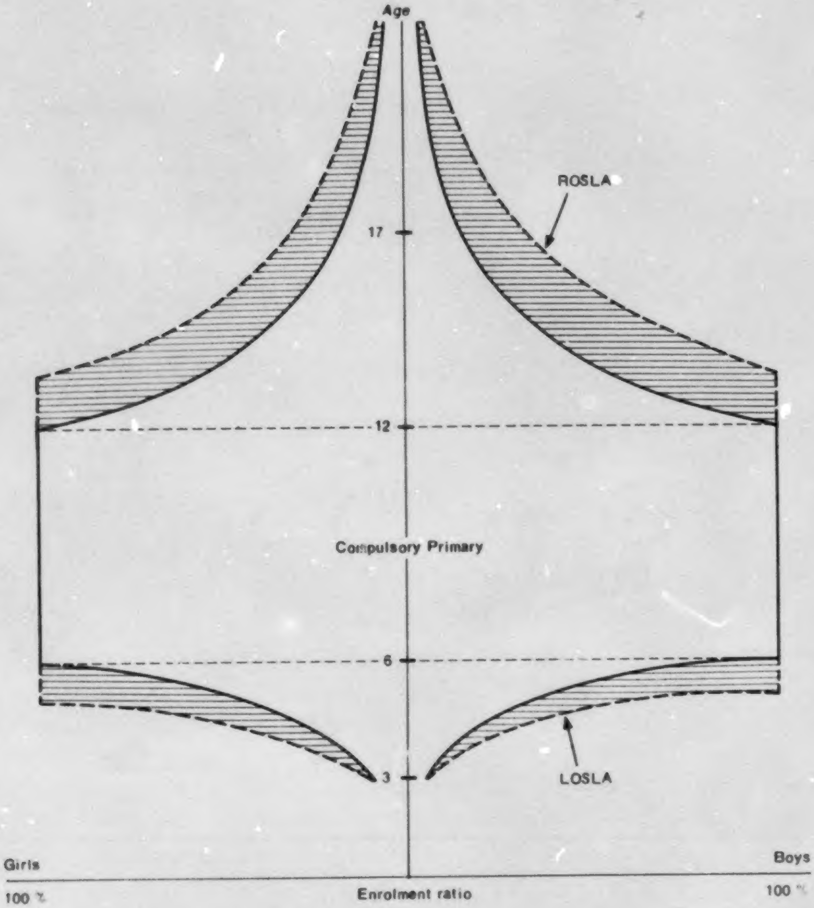
1) LOSLA is chosen instead of LOSEA in order to preserve the phonetic similarity to the established ROSLA term.

2) See G. Psacharopoulos, "Economic implications of raising the school leaving age", Comparative Economic Review, February 1978.

Figure 3 **THE EFFECT OF LOSLA VERSUS ROSLA ON THE EDUCATIONAL PYRAMID**


Age
ROSLA
17
12
Compulsory Primary
6
3
LOSLA
Girls
Boys
100 %
Enrolment ratio
100 %

THE COST SIDE

There exist many concepts of what is the "cost" of a social service and some of them are more relevant than others in analysing the economics of activities such as daycare provision and kindergarten.

Social costs versus private costs

It is only the true social opportunity cost that matters regarding the optimality of provision of a service. This covers items such as teachers' salaries and the rental value of classrooms. What people pay (i.e. the private cost) is typically less than the social cost and immaterial for the efficiency discussion. However, the divergence between the private and social cost can determine the demand of a given service and also is relevant for equity considerations.

It should be explicitly stressed that certain government expenditures on children (such as family allowances) are not part of the economic cost of the service. The allowances are simply transfers from the rich and those who do not have children to those who have. These allowances do not entail "production" or use of real resources in our society and hence are not relevant to the efficiency discussion. However, they are important as a measure of the weight given by different governments to social welfare and also can influence the desired optimal size of the family. In the present discussion we consider the number of children as exogenously given.

Total cost versus average cost

Although the amount of total resources devoted to children is "interesting", it is of little use for analytical purposes. What matters in this respect is the average or unit cost per nursery school pupil or day-care place. The reason is that decisions for additional provision are seldom made in a lump sum way, marginal changes being the rule of thumb.

Marginal versus average cost

Actually, it is the marginal cost that is relevant for decisions pertaining to the expansion of kindergartens or crèches. Under certain conditions, the marginal cost will be equal to the average cost. However, there exist cases where a falling average cost will be associated with a lower marginal cost and this is a piece of evidence to look for: How much does one extra child place really cost?

Opportunity cost versus accounting cost

This is another subtle distinction that relates to the previous one. Whether day-care is socially provided (say by a state-financed crèche system) or not, babies are already taken care of at home by their mothers. Therefore, the true incremental cost of the social service is that in addition to the existing best alternative, i.e. day-care at home, that is, it is the comparison between the unit cost of mothers' time and the unit cost of a day-care centre that can, partially, (1) decide the optimal allocation of day-care resources between the family and external institutions.

Recurrent cost versus capital cost

This distinction also relates to the marginal versus average cost concept. When considering expansions at the margin, the existing capital and other overhead facilities can be used and thus the recurrent cost (e.g. teachers' salaries) is the only one that matters. Also, the documentation of capital costs creates empirical problems as investment in buildings takes place in chunks and amortisation to an annual basis is always difficult.

THE BENEFITS SIDE

What are the benefits society as a whole expects from the provision of services for children? It might be useful to classify these under three, not mutually exclusive, broad headings:

a) social demand satisfaction
b) child development, and
c) parental labour force participation.

The demand for kindergarten services might be only due to the fact that parents wish to "consume" such service in the same way as they consume any other service. For example, a housewife might value the extra leisure time made available to her when her children attend nursery school. In such case, the value of the social benefit associated with the provision of kindergartens is equal to the amount of money parents are willing to pay in order to enjoy the service.

However, this consumption view of child facilities is not inconsistent with the investment view, i.e. the fact that kindergartens provide additional, long-lasting benefits accruing to the child and the mother. Let us examine them in turn.

Child benefits

These can be divided into two major sub-categories. First, early

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1) The other ingredient is, of course, the relative benefits of the two modes of day care.

cognitive development and, second, ultimate educational attainment and lifetime earnings. (1)

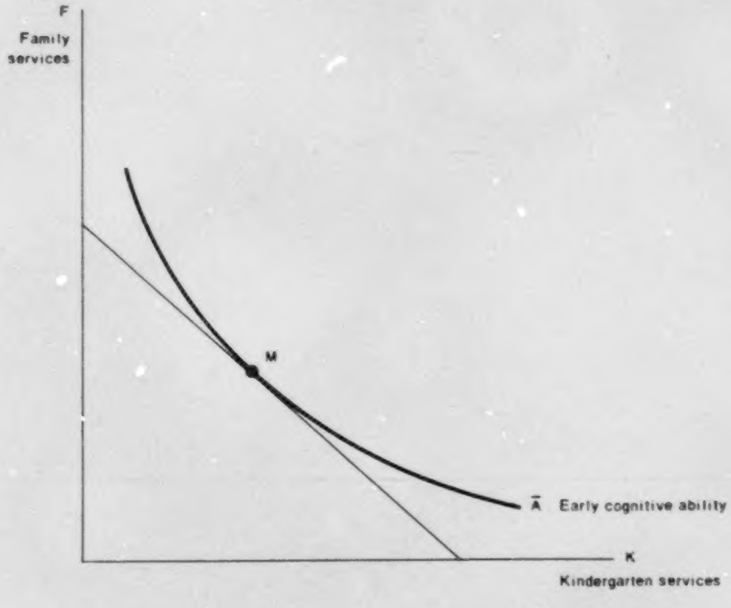
i) From family and kindergarten to early ability

In order to assess the first stream of benefits, one must assume the existence of an early ability (A) generating process, say

$$A = f(F, K)$$

Where F stands for family background and K stands for kindergarten. Both F and K contribute to the development of A. However, one would like to know the exact algebraic specification of this function in order to answer the important question of the ease of substitution between family and kindergarten exposure to the development of early ability. For example, is the tradeoff between F and K as that shown in Figure 4?

Figure 4 **THE HYPOTHESISED TRADE-OFF BETWEEN FAMILY AND KINDERGARTEN SERVICES IN GENERATING A GIVEN LEVEL OF COGNITIVE ABILITY**



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1) For a discussion of the complexities in this front, see N. Bottani, "The parental role in education: Chairman's introduction" and other papers in Part 3, S. Doxiadis, ed., The Child in the World of Tomorrow, Pergamon Press, 1979.

Clearly, kindergarten exposure is expected to have an A boosting effect on those children coming from low F (say, as measured by the educational level of the mother). But what about those children coming from high F? Is a highly educated mother a better informal teacher regarding the development of early ability, relative to a nursery school teacher? These are important questions that can be answered only by reference to empirical data.

Another crucial consideration in this respect is the comparison between the "family price" and the "kindergarten price" in changing A by a given amount. Social policy on kindergartens must be based on the empirical relationships between the "marginal products" of F and K $(\frac{\delta A}{\delta F}, \frac{\delta A}{\delta K})$, derived from the production function and their cost at the market place (P_F, P_K). In terms of Figure 4, the optimal number of kindergarten services is found at point M where the ratios of the marginal products and market prices of F and K are equal to each other.

ii) From early ability to educational attainment

Early ability is fed as an input to the next stages of development, such as late ability and ultimate educational level completed. To put it formally, early ability is a raw input to the educational production function:

ED = f(A, School inputs)

where ED = can stand either for the ultimate level of educational attainment or an index of scholastic achievement and

A = stands for early ability.

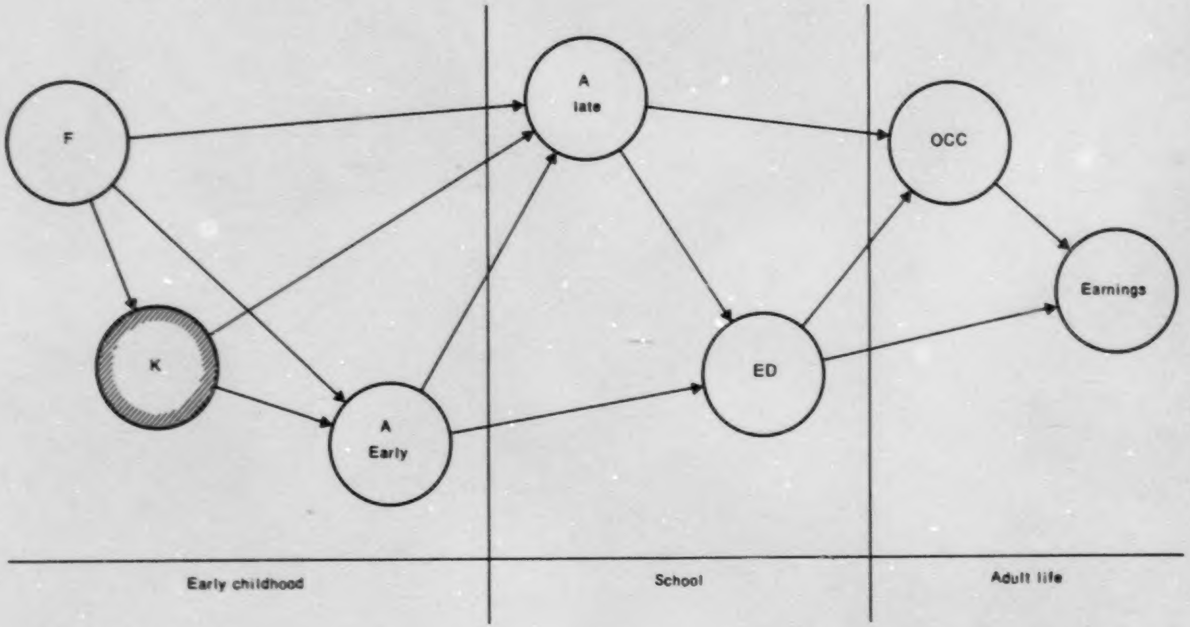
A higher level of previously generated early ability is tantamount to a lower cost of the formal educational process. The raw inputs to this process (say, children at the age of 5) are somehow already formed and make the task of the primary school teacher easier. Also a higher early A might remove a particular handicap of the child at an early stage and thus enable him or her to attain a higher ED (e.g., complete high school instead of dropping out).

iii) From education to earnings

However, this is not the end of the causation chain. A higher level of educational attainment can lead to a better occupation and hence higher earnings over a lifetime. Although one would expect the impact of early ability boosting to diminish as years go by, the possibility exists that kindergartens might have a lifetime lasting effect.

The long chain of causation just described is schematically summarised in Figure 5.

Figure 5 **FROM FAMILY BACKGROUND TO ADULT EARNINGS**


F
K
A
Early
A
late
ED
OCC
Earnings
Early childhood
School
Adult life

A = Ability

F = Family background

ED = Education

OCC = Occupation

K = Kindergarten

Mother's labour force participation benefits

When a mother's time is free because of the provision of a day-care or nursery school place for her child, she can use her free time in two ways: for increased "home production" (i.e. shopping around for lower food prices, better quality meals, etc.) or out of home production by participating in the labour force. To the extent that her market wage is higher than the implicit (shadow) home production wage, this difference between the two kinds of "wages" is at the same time a private and a social benefit resulting from the provision of the nursery school place for her child.

However, the stream of benefits to the mother does not end with the end of nursery school. The fact that she has not interrupted her working life means she has accumulated experience, i.e. a special form of human capital which will provide benefits over a lifetime.

This discussion is illustrated in Figure 6 showing the age-earnings profiles of a working mother whose child has been in day care or attending nursery school, and that for a non-married working female as the control group. (1) The social benefits associated with day-care provision are only those in excess of the implicit domestic production value of the non-working mother (area ACDG). Note that the domestic production value (shaded area CDIH) is immaterial for the social cost-benefit calculation. The second part of social benefits comes from the investment in on-the-job training (GBFE). The total plus area (after proper discounting, of course) can be compared to the minus area (HIKJ) representing the social cost of day-care facilities, in order to arrive at an overall profitability measure of the service. If the benefits exceed the costs, this is a signal pointing at the desirability of increasing the capacity of crèches or kindergartens.

Evidently, the case presented in Figure 6 is highly illustrative. The profiles of married and single females will differ for a host of reasons other than children depending on the particular characteristics of the individual (such as colour, or educational level) and these are considerations that must be taken into account in empirical applications of this framework.

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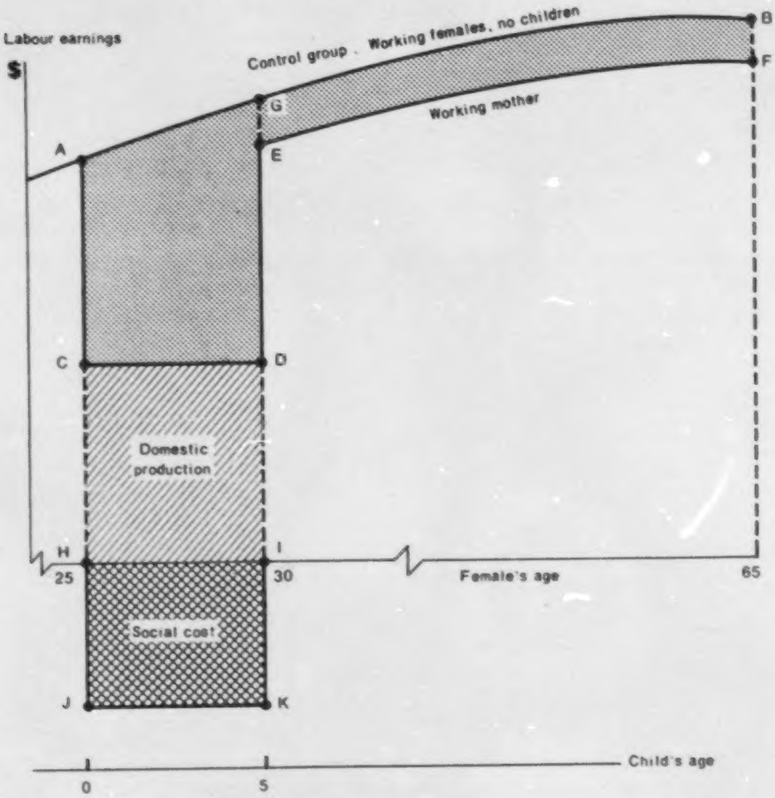
1) The figure can easily be modified to deal with part-time labour force participation. For an attempt to apply a similar framework to Swedish data, see S. Gustafsson, "Cost benefit analysis of early childhood care and education", OECD/CERI document, May 1978 (mimeo).

Figure 6 **COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF THE PROVISION OF DAYCARE**


Labour earnings
$
Control group . Working females, no children
Working mother
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
Domestic production
Social cost
25
30
Female's age
65
Child's age
0
5

203

III

SOME ORDERS OF COSTS

After having provided a theoretical taxonomy of issues and relevant items to look at, we shall now make an attempt to document the empirical size of some of the variables discussed above. The total amount of resources used for services to children is a first consideration we focus on. But because of the scarcity of data in this respect we shall approach the issue by means of several steps and we shall also have to make some approximations. One step is to start by examining the coverage of a particular service rather than its cost. Then one can approximate the cost of a particular service in the absence of data in a given country by the cost relationships observed in other countries.

It should be emphasised that my concern here is not to present a complete statistical picture of the costs and benefits of social provision of services for children. (1) Rather it is to present a few key figures as a means of getting some hints on the present empirical state of some of the issues discussed in section II.

ON COVERAGE

Let us start from the provision of kindergarten or pre-primary education, an area where there exists information for most countries. Table A-1 in Section VI gives the evolution of absolute enrolments in such schools over the last 20 years in 25 countries. These figures of course mean little unless translated into enrolment ratios, i.e. as the percentage of children in a particular age group. This is done in table 1 below, which shows a rather astonishing differential coverage of nursery schools in OECD Member countries. Whereas France has a 100 per cent coverege of the 3-5 years old, the United States covers only 52 per cent, Japan 39 per cent, New Zealand 32 per cent and Norway 13 per cent of the relevant age group. Clearly, part of these wide differences are due to differences in the definition of "pre-primary" education or in the compulsory school starting age. But perhaps the major part is due to a differential philosophy on the pros and cons of nursery education.

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1) After all, this would have been an impossible task given the present state of data availability.

If the differences in the level of coverage between countries are not strictly comparable, a more valid comparison can be drawn by reading table 1 horizontally. This shows that countries such as Germany, Norway and Portugal have nearly doubled the 3-5 year-old coverage in a six-year period, whereas in other countries the participation of young children in pre-compulsory education facilities has shown only modest increases. Evidently, questions arise at this point as to whether this is the result of an intentional educational policy or simply the reflection of social demand? Should countries that appear "low" in this league table attempt to accelerate kindergarten provision? Answers to these questions can result only from a social cost-benefit calculus as that outlined in the previous section.

Table 1

THE PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATIO
IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1970 AND 1976

(percentage)

Country	Enrolment ratio (3 - 5)	
	1970	1976
France	87.0	100.0
Germany	40.0	78.5
Italy	62.6	70.1
Japan	23.4	39.3
Netherlands	60.1	68.0
New Zealand	23.5	31.7
Norway	4.5	13.3
Portugal	2.8	7.6
Spain	42.1	45.1
United Kingdom	11.0	14.1
United States	39.8	51.9

Source: Tables A-2 and A-3 below.

THE CHANGING EDUCATIONAL PYRAMID

The statistical information contained in Section VI (tables A-2 to A-4) permits the documentation of the actual shape and overtime changes in the educational pyramid in different countries, as discussed in Section II above. Regarding the actual shape, substantial differences are observed at the base of the pyramid (impressionistically illustrated in Figure 7), whereas the main trunk of 100 per cent enrolments is common to all countries. Also, Figure 8 shows that between 1970 and 1976 in France there have been more enrolment gains at the upper rather than the bottom of the educational pyramid in this particular country. Again, questions arise as to whether this has been a desirable development.

Figure 7 **THE DIFFERENTIAL SHAPE OF THE BASE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PYRAMID IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

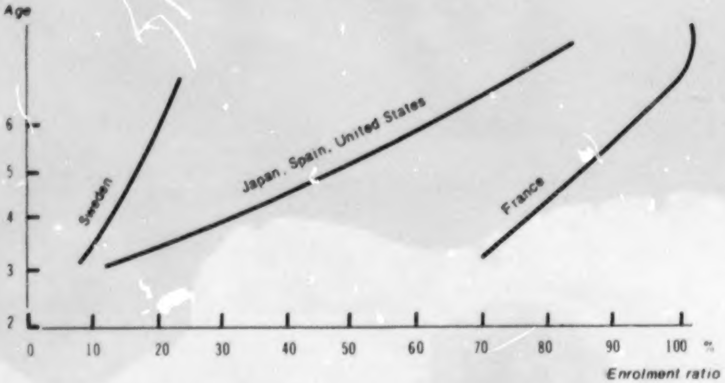
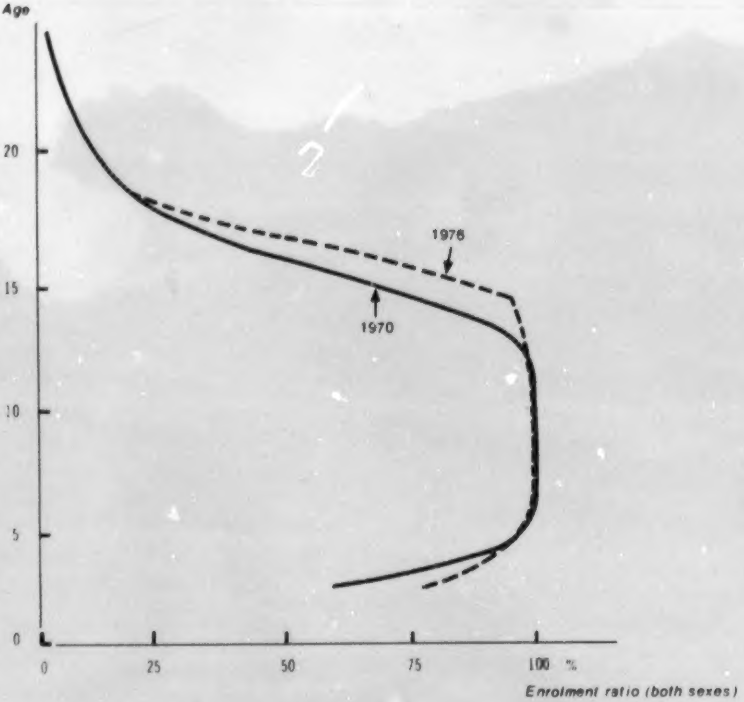


Figure 8 **THE CHANGING EDUCATIONAL PYRAMID IN FRANCE**



THE PROVISION OF DAY CARE OR CRECHE FACILITIES

The statistical information on this front leaves much to be desired, Belgium and France being notable exceptions. (1) Table 2 shows the vast differential availability of places in this respect, although once more a great part of the observed differences must be due to differential definitions. But the fact remains that in the case of Portugal the 14,615 crèche places cover only 3.5 per cent of the 0 to 3 population age group. To what extent this figure is "low" or, perhaps, "high", depends upon what one expects from day care provision relative to its cost. The corresponding crèche coverage in Greece is 8.9 per cent, in Spain 10.8 per cent and in Germany 20 per cent.

Table 2

THE CAPACITY OF DAY-CARE INSTITUTIONS

Country	Year	Number of places
Belgium	1976	37.488
Denmark	1978	45,871
France	1968	29,239
Greece	1979	40,000
Japan	1975	1,631,000
New Zealand	1979	14,803
Portugal	1977	14,615
Spain	1979	140,684
Sweden	1980	235.100

Source: OECD/CERI Country Files. (These contain selected documentation provided by national authorities).

Table 3 shows the steady increase in pre-school participation by age in Denmark. Also, table 4 shows a dramatic increase in pre-school classes relative to kindergartens between 1965 and 1976 in the same country.

Table 5 provides similar statistical information for Japan. Kindergartens have grown much faster than day nurseries and also cover a larger portion of the population.

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1) See Denise Ragu, "Fichier coûts des équipements collectifs: Les crèches", Commissariat général du Plan, September 1975, and M.L. Carels and G. Manni, "Les crèches en Belgique", OECD/CERI document, May 1978 (mimeo).

Table 3

THE PARTICIPATION RATE IN PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS, DENMARK, 1978

(per cent of respective population group)

Age	Participation rate
0	16.6
1	25.9
2	30.6
3	42.7
4	48.3
5	50.0
6	90.0

Note: Figures include participation in kindergartens and pre-primary classes of the school system.

Source: OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table 4

THE NUMBER OF KINDERGARTEN AND PRE-SCHOOL PLACES IN DENMARK, 1960-1976

Year	Kindergarten	Pre-school classes (6 years old)
1960	27,850	-
1965	32,400	3,050
1970	53,250	20,900
1975	91,850	44,900
1976	88,650	48,800
1978	99,701	55,089

Source: Ministry of Education, U-90: Danish Educational Planning and Policy in a Social Context at the end of the 20th century, 1978, p. 127.

Table 5

THE EVOLUTION OF KINDERGARTENS VERSUS DAY NURSERIES IN JAPAN, 1960-1974

(enrolment ratios, per cent)

Age	Kindergartens		Day nurseries	
	1960	1974	1960	1974
3	2	6	7	17
4	11	48	12	23
5	31	64	17	23
3 - 5	15	39	12	21

Source: Educational Standards in Japan, Ministry of Education, 1975, table 1-1.

THE LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE

International statistics are not very forthcoming on social expenditures for children. For example, Unesco lumps together pre-primary and primary educational expenditures (see table A-7). Also, this expenditure is often an underestimate of its true level because of the many actors involved (e.g., the central government, the local authorities and the parents). Table 6 gives an example in this respect from the case of Germany, where, even if properly recorded, official expenditure statistics would have missed over three-quarters of the true expenditure on pre-school education. Also, table 7 gives another dimension of the problem mentioned in the previous section regarding the cut-off point of what one would consider as a policy-related expenditure on children. Clearly, items (a), (c) and (d) might axiomatically be assumed as a sine qua non, i.e. a necessary expenditure on children the level of which cannot be questioned, whereas item (b) is a transfer, i.e. it does not represent a real resource cost in the economic sense of the term. It is for these reasons here we shall abstract from expenditures of the kind listed in table 7.

Instead, on the basis of a variety of individual country sources, it was possible to compile table 8, showing the total level of expenditure on pre-school education and day care in a small number of countries. This expenditure has been expressed as a percentage of the country's total recurrent spending on education as to provide a numerative for the sake of cross-country comparisons. Once more, the differences between the individual countries should not be taken literally because of definitional and statistical reporting discrepancies.

To the extent the information in table 8 is even approximately correct, it supports the following preliminary proposition: the level of expenditure on young children is rather "small" in absolute terms in most Member countries.

The validity of this proposition can be cross-checked by using the aggregate Unesco data on expenditure in pre-school and primary education. As shown in table A-7 below, pre-primary and primary education combined typically account for one-third to one-quarter of the total education budget. Given the earlier documented fact that enrolment in pre-primary classes is well below 100 per cent in most countries, it is not surprising that the total resources devoted to that level of education is comparatively small. Although necessary, however, this is not a sufficient condition for the observed fact as it also depends upon the average cost per enrolled pupil.

A number of alternative sources give an explicit breakdown of the total educational expenditure by level and confirm the fact that what is spent at the pre-primary level is small relative to the other levels (see table 9). Also in Switzerland the ratio of nursery to primary school spending of the cantons in 1977 was 1:14. (1)

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1) From OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table 6

THE FINANCE COMPOSITION OF EXPENDITURES FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN GERMANY, 1974

Source of finance	Expenditure (DM 10^6)	Percentage distribution
Central government	2	0.1
Regional (Länder)	30	1.7
Local (municipalities)	360	20.0
Private	1 400	78.2
Total	1 792	100.0

__Source__: Department of Youth, Family and Health, "Report of the Scientific Committee on Family Questions", 23 October 1978.

Table 7

NON DAY CARE EXPENDITURES FOR THE 0-2 YEAR OLD, DENMARK, 1978

Expenditure item	DKr (10^6)
a) Pre-natal examinations and obstetric aid	115
b) Maintenance allowances during pregnancy and delivery	644
c) Health visitor programme	138
d) Prophylactic examinations of young children	50

__Source__: Danish Ministry of Social Affairs.

Table 8

THE TOTAL LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE ON CHILDREN: SERVICES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

Country (1)	Year (2)	Expenditure item (3)	Total expenditure (10^6) (4)		(4) as per cent of educational budget (5)
Denmark	1978	Day care	Dkr	3,917	
France	1974	Pre-school	F	2,053	4.4
"	1979	" "	F	4,624	
Germany	1976	Nursery	DM	1,152	3.3
"	1978	Kindergarten	DM	2,434	
Japan	1974	Pre-school	Yen	266,182	4.6
New Zealand	1975	Pre-school	NZ$	8.6	1.7
Norway	1976	Kindergarten	NKr	321	3.8
Switzerland a)	1977	Pre-school	SF	96.2	1.6

__Note__: a) refers only to canton expenditure.

In comparing the level of expenditure in column 4 of this table and in table 9 it should be noted that expenditure on any age-interval in the "education pyramid" must be related to the __length__ of the interval as well as to the numbers enrolled per year of age within that interval and to the average cost per child at that stage. Thus countries where school starts at age 7 would spend proportionately more on pre-school services than countries where school starts at 5, other things being equal.

__Source__: OECD/CERI Country Files and Unesco, __Statistical Yearbook__, various years.

Table 9

THE PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE
TO THE PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY LEVELS

Country	Year	Pre-primary	Primary
Belgium	1975	6.8	20.4
France	1977	6.3	17.4
"	1970	5.1	2.3
Ireland	1975	9.2	27.8
Italy	1975	5.2	31.0
Japan	1970	0.6	44.0
Netherlands	1975	8.7	25.6
United Kingdom	1975	0.5	28.5
" "	1970	0.6	28.6

Note: Reported percentages are out of a horizontal sum equal to 100 corresponding to the total educational budget on all school levels.

Sources: France (1977) from the State Budget.
Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and the United Kingdom (1975) from Eurostat, 1978, pp. 190-1.
France (1970), Japan and the United Kingdom (1970) from OECD, Educational Expenditure in France, Japan and the United Kingdom, 1977, p. 47.

THE UNIT COST STRUCTURE

As mentioned in Section II above, it is the per-child cost that matters in assessing the desirability of expansion of services to children. We already know a lot on the primary-secondary-higher education unit cost structure (see table A-8). Thus we know that the annual recurrent cost associated with the provision of one primary school place is of the order of $500 and this is about one-fifth of the unit cost of higher education. Information on the primary unit costs is virtually non-existent. However, different pieces of evidence on participation and expenditure were matched as to arrive at comparative table 10. The information is again very thin and should be treated with caution. But it all points to one fact: nursery education is much cheaper than primary education. This is confirmed by an earlier cost analysis in France, Japan and the United Kingdom (see table 11).

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE FINANCE

One important consideration regarding the cost side is who pays for it. The proportion of the time cost covered by public funds reflects to a large extent the weight given by the state to pre-school education or daycare provision. Alternatively, the share of cost paid privately is an indication of the importance given by families to the services of pre-school institutions.

Table 10

THE AVERAGE ANNUAL COST PER PLACE IN PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS

(in $US)

Country	Year	Kindergarten	Crèche
Australia	1978		1,565
Belgium	1976		8,400
Denmark (private)(a)	1978	792	1,284
" (social)(b)	1978	2,683	5,317
Finland	1978	1,577	
France	1974	196	
"	1979	415	7,000
Greece	1979		965
Japan	1970	160	
"	1974	391	
Netherlands	1976	851	
New Zealand	1978	331	
Portugal	1977		396
Spain	1979		435
Switzerland(c)	1977	316	

Notes: a) Parents' payment.
b) State and municipal funding
c) Refers only to the expenditure of the cantons.

Source: OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table 11

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ANNUAL COST PER STUDENT IN PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1970

Country (1)	Expenditure per student ($US)		Pre-primary to primary ratio (2)/(3)
	Pre-primary (2)	Primary (3)	
France	118	335	0.35
Japan	87	255	0.34
New Zealand a)	331	725	0.46
United Kingdom	79	223	0.35

Note: a) 1978, OECD/CERI Country Files.

Source: Based on OECD, Educational Expenditure ..., op. cit. 1977, p.50.

Table 12

THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN PRIVATE KINDERGARTENS, JAPAN, 1975

Age	Per cent private
3	97
4	82
5	67
3-5	75

Source: Educational Standards in Japan, Ministry of Education, 1975, Table 1-2.

Table 12 shows that, as judged from the enrolment share, three-quarters of kindergarten education in Japan is private. However, the private share drops drastically by single age group. Table 13 shows that, in terms of costs, the private share becomes zero at the primary educational level and rises again at the post-compulsory level. It also shows that the private finance of kindergartens has fallen between 1965 and 1973 as a higher share of the cost is borne by the state.

Table 12

THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN PRIVATE KINDERGARTENS, JAPAN, 1975

Age	per cent private
3	97
4	82
5	67
3-5	75

Source: Educational Standards in Japan, Ministry of Education, 1975, Table 1-2.

Table 13

THE SHARE OF PRIVATE FINANCE OF EDUCATION IN JAPAN, 1965 AND 1973

(percentage)

Educational level	1965	1973
Kindergarten	82	67
Primary	0	0
Secondary	75	47
University	57	47

Source: Educational Standards in Japan, Ministry of Education, Table 5-5.

Table 14 shows a similar evolution going on in Italy where the small state kindergarten sector is growing faster than the private sector. In Denmark there exists an interesting scheme covering the cost of daycare facilities. The capital costs are borne entirely by the state, whereas 35 per cent of the recurrent cost is paid by the parents. (1) In Belgium, parents pay only FB 159 per day towards the FB 935 full cost of a public crèches. (1)

Finally, it was possible to compile table 15 showing the private share in pre-school enrolments in 17 countries. This ranges from 0 in Yugoslavia to 89 per cent in Portugal. Other Mediterranean countries, like Spain and Turkey, exhibit higher private shares, whereas the corresponding figure in Denmark, Iceland and the United Kingdom is below the 10 per cent mark.

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1) From OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table 14

THE EVOLUTION OF STATE VERSUS NON-STATE NURSERY SCHOOL PLACES IN ITALY, 1968-1975

School	Number of pupils		Growth index (1968 = 100)
	1968	1975	
State	68,462	501,844	733
Non-state	1,435,380	1,187,731	83
Total	1,503,842	1,689,575	112

Source: OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table 15

THE SHARE OF PRIVATE ENROLMENTS IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION CIRCA 1977

Country	Private share (percentage)
Austria b)	30
Belgium	57
Denmark a)	7
Finland b)	10
France	14
Germany	72
Greece	13
Iceland	8
Italy	68
Japan	74
Netherlands	71
New Zealand b)	12
Portugal	89
Spain	59
Switzerland	19
Turkey	82
United Kingdom	5
United States	32
Yugoslavia	0

Notes: a) Enrolment in schools run by private bodies, although receiving a public funding reimbursement covering 80 per cent of the total costs.

b) 1979.

Sources: Unesco, Education Statistics, Latest year available, January 1979, Table 1, and OECD/CERI Country Files.

ON TEACHERS

Could the differential cost of pre-primary education documented earlier be due to quality differences between countries as, for example, in the utilisation of teachers? The evidence shown in table 16 points to a negative answer. Student/teacher ratios in pre-school education are very similar to those observed at the primary level and do not differ dramatically between countries (Norway being an exception).

Concentrating on a single country, we observe a steady improvement of the student/teacher ratio in France (1):

1974	36	1977	33
1975	35	1978	32
1976	33		

It should however be noted that in a country like Norway, less than one-third of the persons employed by kindergartens hold approved pre-school teaching qualifications and that this proportion has remained virtually steady over the last few years. (2)

Table 16

STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION CIRCA 1977

Country	Student teacher ratio
Australia b)	26
Austria	26
Belgium	25
Canada	22
Denmark	26
Germany b)	15
Finland	24
France	33 a)
Greece	25
Ireland	31
Italy	27 a)
Japan	24
Luxembourg	21
Netherlands	24
New Zealand	26
Norway	5
Portugal	21
Spain	35
Switzerland	20 b)
Turkey	21
Yugoslavia	10

Notes: a) From R. Zachman, "Financial aspects of early childhood services, *op. cit*.

b) From OECD/CERI Country Files.

Source: Based on Unesco, *Education Statistics*, Latest year available, January 1979, table 1.

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1) From Zachman, "Financial aspects of early childhood services", OECD/CERI document, 1979 (mimeo).

2) Central Bureau of Statistics, *Child Welfare Statistics*, Oslo, 1976.

IV

DOCUMENTING THE BENEFITS

As mentioned in the introductory section, the social benefits associated with expenditure on children could be divided into two parts: those occurring to the society via the child and those generated via the working mother. Let us examine some evidence on these two fronts.

BENEFITS VIA THE CHILD

The psychological literature is rich in results concerning the development of human abilities and general intelligence, and at the same time rich on controversies regarding the significance and reliability of the existing estimates. (1)

From our point of view, the two most crucial questions we are interested in are, first, the relationship between early ability and late ability, and second, the relationship between ability and the later performance of the individual in school and society in general.

a) *The correlation between early and late ability*

It is very unfortunate that the existing estimates mostly refer to IQ testing which reflects only part of the ability of the individual. Given this qualification, the correlation between early and late ability is on the high side.

Thus the zero-order correlation in Jencks' work between early and late IQ is 0.830. (2) The corresponding correlation in Fägerlind's work is 0.745. (3) Bloom (4) reports that 50 per cent of the ability level

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1) E.g., see R.E. Snow, "Mental abilities", in *The Encyclopedia of Education*, 1971; A.R. Jensen, "How much can we boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" *Harvard Educational Review*, 1969; D. Eklind and A. Sameroff, "Developmental Psychology", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 1970; J. Kagan, "On class differences and early development", in V.H. Denenberg, ed. *Education of the Infant and Young Child*, Academic Press, 1970; and for a general review, H.A. Averch et al. *How Effective is Schooling?* Education technology publications, 1974.

2) C. Jencks et al. *Inequality*, Basic Books, 1972, p. 322.

3) I. Fägerlind, *Formal Education and Adult Earnings*, Almqvist and Wiksell, 1975, p. 58.

4) B.S. Bloom, *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, John Wiley, 1964. (Some of my colleagues inform me that Bloom's figures have far more controversy surrounding them than consensus.)

of the individual is built by the age of 4, and that the ability level increases by 60 per cent between the ages of 4 and 6 (see table 17). He also reports a series of correlations between early and late IQ in excess of 0.450 from four independent studies (Bayley, Hilden, Honzik and Anderson). Selowsky (1) reports the following regressions from Conlisk, where the early to late IQ coefficients are associated with low standard errors (in parenthesis):

$$IQ_{18} = 4.77 + \underset{(.099)}{.490}\ IQ_{1-5} + \underset{(.358)}{1.514}\ S,\ R^2 = .45$$

$$IQ_{18} = 8.11 + \underset{(.093)}{.527}\ IQ_{6-8} + \underset{(.367)}{1.051}\ S,\ R^2 = .49$$

where S is years of schooling.

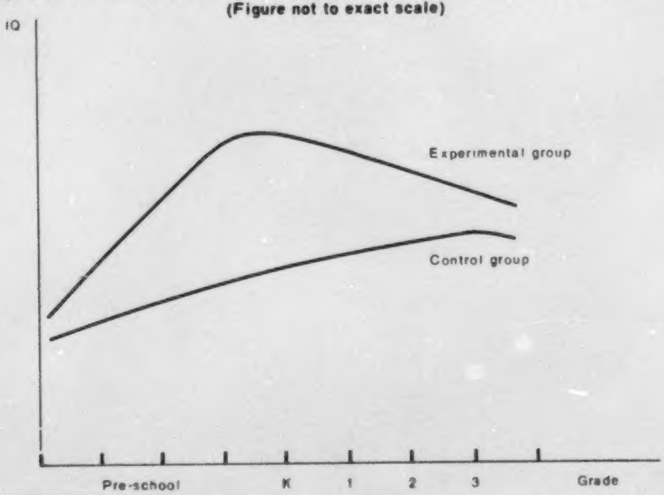
Table 17

THE BUILDING UP OF ABILITY TO AGE 17

Age	Per cent developed by age
1	20
4	50
8	80
13	92

Source: B.S. Bloom, Stability and Change in Human Characteristics, John Wiley, 1964.

Figure 9 **THE RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL PRE-SCHOOL INTERVENTION (Figure not to exact scale)**



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1) M. Selowsky, "A note on pre-school-age investment in human capital in developing countries", Economic development and cultural change, July 1976.

It should be noted, however, that Averch et al. (op. cit., p. 132) report evidence (as that by Weikart) where pre-school intervention has a definite initial impact on ability, but after a few years this impact fades away and the IQ of the control group is nearly equal to the IQ of the experimental group. (See Figure 9).

b) Early ability and life chances

In my opinion, the best evidence on this front comes from the sociological literature on path analysis. This links together several of the variables in the family/early ability/education/earnings nexus in a neat temporal causal sequence.

Two such examples are chosen, one from the United States and the other from Sweden (Figures 10 and 11). (1) The numbers of the arrows are "path coefficients" and their size denotes the relative strength of one variable in affecting the next. The empirical estimates in the two countries are strikingly similar. Thus there exist very strong paths between early and late ability, reflecting the positive correlation reported in the previous sub-section. (2) But the simple model is now expanded to include the effect of early ability of the level of educational attainment of the individual. The evidence points to the fact that this effect is fairly strong. Also, a high level of education means a better occupation, thus indirectly influencing the level of earnings later in life.

That there exist strong direct and indirect effects between early ability and later life chances is a matter of fact. What is not known, however, is the monetary size of the benefits in order to compare them to the cost of generating this ability. Kindergarten (K) is a missing variable to be placed somewhere between "F" and "A-early" in Figures 10 and 11.

BENEFITS VIA THE MOTHER

The best way of documenting the potential benefits associated with early childhood services via the mother is evidence on the labour force participation of married females by age. Table 18 shows the sharp dip in the labour force participation rate of married women between the mostly pre-children and children raising ages of 20-24 and 25-29, respectively.

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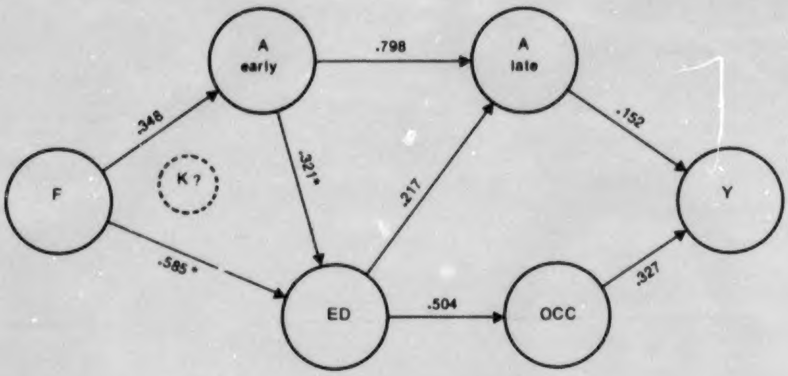
1) The graphs are incomplete in the sense of presenting only the arrows relevant to the present discussion. The "total effect" of one variable onto the next can be worked out only by reference to the original publication.

2) The two studies use slightly different ability measures at different ages.

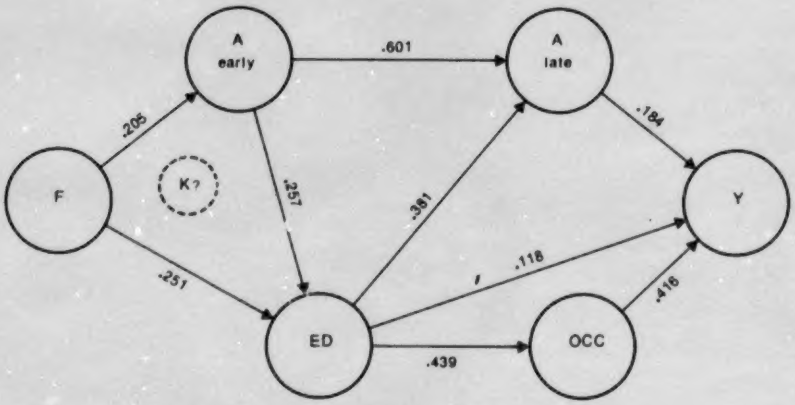
Figure 10 **THE DETERMINANTS OF LIFE CHANCES IN THE UNITED STATES**


A early
.798
A late
.348
.321*
.217
.152
F
K ?
Y
.585*
.504
.327
ED
OCC

* Average of high and low paths.

Source : Jencks, op. cit., p. 346.

Figure 11 **THE DETERMINANTS OF LIFE CHANCES IN SWEDEN**


A early
.601
A late
.205
.257
.381
.184
F
K ?
Y
.251
.118
.416
ED
.439
OCC

F = Family background
A = Ability
ED = Education

OCC = Occupation
Y = Income
K = Kindergarten

Source : Fägerlind, op. cit., p. 65.

Table 18

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED
WOMEN BY AGE GROUP, EARLY SEVENTIES

(percentage)

Country	Age group	
	20-24	25-29
Germany	61	45
Ireland	15	7
United Kingdom	60	49
United States	51	44

Source: Equal Opportunities for Women, OECD, Paris, 1979, p. 129.

Regardless of differences between the level of female labour force participation rate in various countries, the common feature is a decline of participation by 15 to 50 per cent between the two age groups. (See also table A-11).

Table 19 shows an interesting within-country over-time comparison. With a possible one or two exceptions, the overall trend has been on an increase in the female labour force participation rate between the sixties and the seventies. However, the relative discrepancy between the participation rates of the two age groups has diminished over time in most countries.

In Belgium the percentage of mothers reporting an occupation on birth has increased from 41 per cent to 55 per cent between 1971 and 1975. (1)

To what extent has this rapid increase in the labour force participation rate been due to the parallel development of early childhood services? Or, perhaps, to what extent have early childhood services been developed to cater for the increasingly working mother? Clearly, both forces must have been at work and it is very difficult to separate them empirically.

Another related dimension is the parallel increase of the educational attainment of females. Table 20 shows that the labour force participation rate of women is a sharp positive function of education. The link here must be sought in the high opportunity cost of the more educated woman associated with staying at home. Although the value of home production cannot be overemphasised, the fact that a woman decides to seek paid work in the market means that her money wage is higher than the implicit shadow price of working at home. The provision of childhood services clearly contributes to female mobility between the home and the market, thus contributing to the optimal allocation of labour resources in contemporary societies.

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1) Information from OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table 19

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

(percentage)

Country	Year	Age group	
		20-24	25-59
Australia	1966	59	33
	1973	62	45
Austria	1961	75	50
	1971	68	50
Belgium	1961	52	28
	1970	61	34
Finland	1960	61	56
	1974	66	75
France	1968	62	45
	1974	66	54
Denmark	1965	62	44
	1973	71	67
Sweden	1965	56	41
	1974	71	70
United States	1960	45	41
	1974	63	53

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Source: Equal Opportunities for Women, op. cit., p. 28.

Table 20

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

(percentage)

Country	Year	Educational level		
		Primary	Secondary	University
Australia	1971	23	49	58
Austria	1971	48	61	75
France	1968	40	62	69
Sweden	1976	59	72	87
United States	1972	39	47	58

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Source: Equal Opportunities for Women, op. cit., p. 44.

V

SOME RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The starting point of the provision of services for children is demographic. Demography sets the upper bound of the potential population to be served. Population statistics and projections are both abundant and of good quality. At a very aggregate level, table 21 indicates that following the birth decline of the 1960s and early seventies, the population group aged 0-4 will show moderate increases to the end of the century in European countries. However, the composition of the population will steadily grow older (see last column of table 21).

Table 21

THE EVOLUTION OF THE 0-4 POPULATION AGE GROUP IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, 1960-2000

Year	Number of children (in thousands)	Percentage of total population
1960	62,030	9.7
1970	58,956	8.4
1975	58,251	8.0
1980	61,127	8.1
1985	64,084	8.2
2000	64,944	7.6

Source: Unesco, A Summary Statistical Review of Education in the World, 1960-75, 1977, p. 11.

On a shorter term and more detailed basis, table 22 shows considerable differences between individual countries. Thus France, Iceland, Spain and Turkey are expected to experience a rise in the 0-4 population group between 1980 and 1985, whereas countries like Norway and the Netherlands will experience a decline during the same period.

QUANTITY VERSUS QUALITY

Although demography can supply the numbers of infants and children to be catered for, it says nothing about the quality of institutions to be created. There exist many kinds of crèches and many kinds of kindergartens.

For example, there exist crèches with or without professional nursing staff and there exist kindergartens with or without qualified teachers to teach very young children.

Table 22

THE ANTICIPATED CHANGE IN THE 0-4 AGE GROUP, 1980-1985

Country	Index (1980 = 100)
Austria	94
Germany	94
Greece	93
Luxembourg	92
Netherlands	87
Norway	89
France	107
Iceland	113
Spain	108
Turkey	106

Source: OECD data file.

Differential quality means differential cost, and it is here that economics enter. But since costs are only one half of the story, reference to educational psychology must be made in order to determine whether the extra cost is associated with a benefit of sufficient size to justify the better quality.

Clearly, what is needed is a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject, an activity that, in my opinion, is still in its infancy. It is for this reason that, instead of a conclusion, I have chosen to give a short list of research topics I feel should be urgently tackled in order to increase our understanding in this delicate policy area.

A RESEARCH AGENDA

a) Assessing the true marginal social cost of different kinds of services for children

This can refer to crèches and kindergartens of different quality.

Further, it can refer to the provision of nursery school services by the mother at home, a classic case of national accounts statistical neglect.

b) Monetising the benefits of different kinds of services for children

Again, these benefits can refer to the mother, to the child or society as a whole. One could argue that these benefits should not be monetised on grounds of their merit good character. However, I would argue that they should also be monetised on grounds of the existing (and increasing) scrutiny on public expenditure. A case for spending on children can be more easily made if the "child sector" competes on equal grounds with other economic sectors where the allocation of funds is made on the basis of economic profitability.

c) Assessing the substitutability between different child services inputs in generating a desired "outcome"

The latter could be of the traditional cognitive type or the socialisation, flexibility, better school-raw-input type. For example, although crèches might liberate the mother for working at cost X, the benefits they provide relative to care at home might be Y, where X > Y. The existing literature on issues as this is "carta blanca".

d) Blending of the costs and benefits

Even if one had reliable information on annual costs and benefits, blending of these two ingredients in order to arrive at an overall cost-benefit ratio would not be easy. The reason is we lack one additional piece of information, namely the durability of the investment benefit; for example, will the kindergarten benefit last for one, two, three or perhaps more years after the age of 6 and, if yes, for how many years? If not, what would be its rate of depreciation? Or, perhaps, what would be the rate of its future enhancement due to its combination with further complementary inputs (such as formal schooling after the age of 6)?

e) Assessing the profitability of LOSLA

If we have some information on the economics of raising the school-leaving age, we have only speculations regarding the social profitability of lowering the school entry age. Yet if more countries follow the example of France and the Netherlands in advocating compulsory LOSLA reform, the educational policy-maker should be more informed about the underlying economics. For if LOSLA is in fact socially profitable, its adoption should be speeded up and the bill should be paid by the taxpayer. On the other hand, if it proves to be mainly a kind of expensive babysitting activity, the financial burden of it should be shifted to the consumer of the service.

The existing statistics show that the latter is the rule (i.e. the main source of finance of pre-school education is private) without knowing the social profitability of this activity in the first place.

f) Examining the gap of development between day-care services and kindergarten

As has been mentioned in this report, in some countries the extension of kindergarten has been more impressive, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, than the extension of services for children under 3 years old. This pattern of development might reflect certain structures of social demand, but the question should also be asked and explored whether this pattern is justified in economic cost-benefit terms, as presented in this report.

g) Assessing existing and proposed methods (with costs and effectiveness) of training people to "care" for young children

This topic would cover, for example, an investigation of the level of qualifications which are really required for early education staff, the possibility of very short training periods such as playgroup leader courses or courses for childminders, and an estimate of the "return" which might be gained by offering courses to parents on early child development tactics.

Let us hope that the International Year of the Child would be the landmark when the economics of early childhood services is taken seriously. It is only this way more informed political decisions could be made in the sphere of pre-school education.

VI. TABLES

Table A-1

TOTAL ENROLMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION, 1960-1977

(in thousands)

Country	1960	1965	1970	1975	1977
Australia			100.8	186.7	203.1
Austria	79.7		120.4		169.3 a)
Belgium	420.7	450.4	415.1	435.9	404.2
Canada	182.0	229.7	350.2	398.5	377.8
Denmark		3.0	20.9	44.9	55.0 b)
Finland		21.1	28.2	59.5	61.9
France	1 374.1	1 778.4	2 213.3	2 591.1	2 576.0
Germany d)	822.0	964.0	1 194.0	1 567.0	1 520.0
Greece	40.2	52.3	87.1	108.4	122.6 a)
Ireland	144.4	119.4	130.3	135.8	148.5 b)
Italy	1 154.1	1 335.0	1 586.8	1 822.5	1 821.7
Japan	742.4	1 137.7	1 674.6	2 292.3	2 453.7
Luxembourg	4.8	5.6	8.0	8.9	7.3
Netherlands	397.8	457.1	491.7	518.9	466.0
New Zealand		27.8	41.1	54.8	58.1 a)
Norway		9.0	12.7	30.5	49.8
Portugal	6.5	11.3	17.1	44.8	61.9 a)
Spain	525.0	610.6	819.9	920.3	956.2 a)
Sweden	48.7		119.0	197.2	236.1
Switzerland				132.5 a)	127.9
Turkey	2.7	3.3	8.2		
United Kingdom		257.0	302.3	370.3	350.0 b)
United States	3 577.0 c)		4 279.0	5 141.0	4 809.0
Yugoslavia				188.5	228.3

a) 1976.

b) From Eurostat, "Education and Training, Rapid Note", 28 February 1979, p. 1.

c) 1959.

d) Includes kindergartens and pre-school classes.

Sources: Year 1960 from OECD, Educational Statistics Yearbook, Vol. I, International tables, 1974, p. 17.

Years 1965 to 1977 from OECD, Educational Statistics in OECD Countries, Paris, 1981.

OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table A-2

ENROLMENT RATIOS IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION, 1970

(percentage)

Country	Age			
	3	4	5	(3-5)
Belgium	93.7	99.6	99.7	
Canada	3.0	14.8	70.5	
France	61.1	87.1	94.5	87.0
Germany b)				40.0
Italy c)	53.1	65.8	69.0	62.6
Japan	4.3	38.2	55.9	23.4 a)
Netherlands	0.1	83.7	95.4	60.1
New Zealand	26.4	43.3	0.7	23.5
Norway	4.3	3.9	5.1	4.5
Portugal		4.2	4.2	2.8
Spain	11.8	43.0	68.8	42.1
United Kingdom	2.5	30.3		11.0
United States	13.6	29.4	74.4	39.8

a) OECD/CERI country files.

b) 1971

c) 1972.

Sources: OECD, Educational Statistics in OECD Countries, op. cit.

Table A-3

ENROLMENT RATIOS IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION, 1976

Country	Age			
	3	4	5	(3-5)
Australia				23.3
Austria	21.6	45.8	61.6	43.5
Denmark	42.7	48.3	50.0	
Finland				15.4 d)
France	81.5	99.1	99.3	101.4
Germany				78.5
Greece a)				24.2
Ireland b)	0.8	62.0	96.6	52.9
Italy b)				70.1
Japan	6.6	48.3	63.8	39.3
Netherlands	4.0	94.7	97.8	68.0
New Zealand	27.4	59.7	1.3	31.7
Norway	15.9	11.0	13.2	13.3
Portugal b)	6.3		10.4	7.6
Spain b)	15.3	52.2	68.3	45.1
Sweden	13.0	17.0	33.0	21.2
Switzerland e)	3.6	16.2	58.2	26.8
United Kingdom c)	2.7	39.5		14.1
United States	20.9	44.0	86.9	51.9

a) 1973

b) 1975

c) 1974

d) 1978, refers to 0-6 years old

e) 1979.

Sources: OECD, Educational Statistics in OECD Countries, op. cit., and OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table A-4

ENROLMENT RATIOS BY SINGLE AGE IN FRANCE AND JAPAN, 1970 AND 1976

(percentage)

Age	France		Japan	
	1970	1976	1970	1976
3	61	82	4	7
4	87	99	38	48
5	100	100	56	64
6	100	100	100	100
7	100	100	100	100
8	100	100	100	100
9	100	100	100	100
10	100	100	100	100
11	100	100	100	100
12	99	100	100	100
13	98	100	100	100
14	89	98	100	100
15	80	94	84	93
16	63	69	80	87
17	46	54	75	88
18	31	35	30	44
19	22	22	22	41
20	15	15	14	25
21	12	12	14	25
22	10	10	1	1
23	8	8	1	1
24	6	7		
25	4	6		
26	3	4		
27	2	4		

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest percentage unit.
Figures in excess of 100 are reported as 100.

Source: Educational Statistics in OECD Countries, op. cit.

Table A-5

KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT BY AGE, NORWAY, 1970-1976

Year	Under 2 years	3 years	4	5	6
1970	1,367	1,474	2,566	3,395	3,909
1971	1,508	1,964	2,919	3,909	4,530
1972	2,592	2,691	3,795	4,795	4,690
1973	3,063	3,159	4,677	5,744	3,452
1974	3,496	3,853	5,044	6,454	6,089
1975	4,296	4,458	6,044	7,218	7,907
1976	4,846	4,870	7,014	8,604	10,373

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Child Welfare Statistics, Oslo, 1978.

TABLE A-6

PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR PERSONNEL, SWITZERLAND, 1965 AND 1975

Year	Crèches and other day care		Nursery schools	
	Number of institutions	Personnel	Number of institutions	Personnel
1965		1,150		
1975	650	4,728	3,339	5,223

Source: Federal Administration, Office of Statistics.

TABLE A-7

TOTAL RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION BY LEVEL

Country	Year	Total expenditure (10^6 national currency)	Pre-primary, primary	Secondary	Higher
Austria	1975	29,367	24.2	50.8	14.7
Belgium	1975	131,906	25.5	47.7	15.3
Canada	1975	11,381	60.4		20.3
Denmark	1975	14,600	71.1		
Finland	1975	5,597	46.1	31.3	12.8
France	1975	46,844	25.1	51.3	13.7
Germany	1974	34,044	31.4	30.5	18.8
Greece	1974	9,348	44.1	29.9	22.0
Iceland	1971	1,471	88.3		7.2
Ireland	1975	200	35.9	37.0	17.7
Italy	1975	5,060,156	34.8	42.4	13.3
Japan	1975	5,826,604	40.3	37.2	10.2
Luxembourg	1973	2,051	43.3	40.0	2.4
Netherlands	1975	14,881	26.0	36.1	28.3
New Zealand	1975	504	37.0	29.7	23.4
Norway a)	1975	8,427	48.8	24.7	13.3
Portugal	1974	8,117	39.8	23.2	9.7
Spain	1974	71,668	78.7		14.5
Sweden	1975	19,281	38.3	13.3	12.3
Switzerland a)	1975	5,979	77.9		17.0
United Kingdom	1974	4,863	25.2	39.3	19.2
United States	1976	100,300	70.4		29.6
Yugoslavia	1975	25,515	48.9	25.5	15.2

Note: a) Includes capital expenditure.

Source: Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1977, Table 6.3.

Table A-8

PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT

(in US$)

Country	Year	Primary	Secondary	Higher
Austria	1974	617	926	2,406
Belgium	1973	406	1,583	2,192
Canada	1974	1,050		3,675
Denmark	1974	1,579		3,790
Finland	1974	971		1,942
France	1973	330	859	1,782
Germany	1974	638	1,085	3,126
Greece	1973	111	111	566
Iceland				
Ireland	1974	162	324	1,280
Italy	1974	420	630	798
Japan	1974	648	712	842
Luxembourg	1973	583	1,108	3,032
Netherlands	1973	547	1,203	3,720
New Zealand	1974	561	505	2,244
Portugal	1974	131	118	472
Spain	1974	131		393
Sweden	1974	2,024		3,643
Switzerland	1974	930	1,674	6,138
United Kingdom	1973	314	754	3,560
United States	1974	1,091		2,618

Source: Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1976, table 6.5.

Table A-9

THE UNIT COST STRUCTURE BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, NETHERLANDS, 1976

(in guilders)

Educational level	Average cost per student
Nursery	2,250
Primary	2,730
Secondary - General	4,460
- Vocational	8,450
University	20,500

Note: Refers to public recurrent expenditure only.

Source: OECD/CERI Country Files.

Table A-10

THE UNIT COST STRUCTURE BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, DENMARK, 1975

(in DKr)

Educational level	Average cost per student
Pre-school classes	3,700
Primary	8,800
Upper secondary	17,000
Vocational training (metal)	26,000
Agricultural college	31,000
Social studies	10,000
Natural sciences	45,000
Engineering (M. Sc.)	71,000
Teacher training (Primary)	20,000

Source: Danish U-90, op. cit., p. 31.

Table A-11

FEMALE LABOUR-FORCE PARTICIPATION BY FAMILY STATUS, SELECTED COUNTRIES

Country	Year	Family status	Labour force participation
Austria a)	1971	Without children	79.4
		With children	39.2
New Zealand b)	1971	Without children	33.5
		One child	13.6
		Two children	7.8
		Three children	6.3
Sweden	1976	Unmarried	71.5
		With children	62.8
United Kingdom	1975	With children, 0-4	27.0
		With children, 5-9	62.0
United States	1976	With children, 0-3	33.8
		With children, 3-5	47.4

a) Mothers aged 30-35.

b) Children under 5 years old.

Source: OECD/CERI Country Files.

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